An excerpt from the forthcoming
***A History of Boston – Telling the Story of This City; All of It*,**
by Firm Chairman Daniel P. Dain

Boston is a world-class city. It is first in higher education, hospitals, life science companies, and sports teams. Boston annually attracts more venture capital than London, Paris, Tokyo, and Beijing combined. Cranes dot the city; there are currently more than 12 million square feet of office space under construction in Boston. Historically, Boston and its environs was the home of the first public school and first college in America, the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the first civil rights movement (in the 1840s when Boston became the first American city to desegregate), the abolition movement, and the women's rights movement. The telephone, the use of ether in anesthesia, the friction match, vulcanized rubber, the sewing machine, the paper bag, the ballpoint pen, the disposable safety razor, the rotary blade lawnmower, technicolor film, the mutual fund, and the microwave oven were invented or first adopted around Boston. The internet traces its roots here. Five U.S. Presidents were from here (as were six presidential runners-up, and eight Speakers of the House). Malcolm X worked at the Parker House and danced at the Roseland State Ballroom; Martin Luther King, Jr. met Coretta Scott in Boston. Boston has the most important history of any American city. Yet, according to Firm Chairman Daniel P. Dain, its history has never been given a comprehensive treatment in print.

Dain has now authored such a comprehensive history of Boston, which, unsurprisingly for a real estate litigator, also examines the legal battles, public discourse, and urban planning that influenced the built environment of the City. Dain explains that "trying to understand what has caused Boston, throughout its history, to swing between periods of urban success and failure is what has motivated me to explore the history of Boston."

Dain's manuscript was recently reviewed by Banker & Tradesman columnist Scott Van Voorhis. This September, the Banker & Tradesman review called it "magnificent and masterful." Van Voorhis wrote:

> Welcome to Boston, the city that reinvents itself every century or so. That's one takeaway from a magnificent and masterful book on the history of Boston written by Dan Dain, a top commercial real estate lawyer by day, author at night.
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> Dain's book, still in draft form but in search of a publisher, looks at all nearly 400 years of the city's history with a particular focus on the ebbs and flows of its economic fortunes.
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> Yet the manuscript is much more than that, covering everything from the original topography of the peninsula that would one day become Boston to the city's role as the birthplace of both the abolition and anti-immigrant movements.
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> And the book also offers both an implicit and at times overtly stated warning, that Boston's current success is not cast in stone, and that the progress of recent

> decades came only after 60 to 70 years of stagnation and malaise covering a good chunk of the 20th century.
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> Dain's draft was completed before Mayor Michelle Wu, whose development policies are still a work in progress, had gotten her feet fully on the ground. … As Dain's book amply shows, progress is not a given and stagnation, if allowed to set in and become the default, can prove deadly.

The full review is available from Banker & Tradesman at https://bankerandtradesman.com/boston-a-contingent-history/

The Boston Globe also covered Dain's project and similarly finds it brimming with historical relevance and intriguing anecdotes. Jon Chesto writes:

> The president of the Dain Torpy law firm has spent much of his free time in the past several years pounding out pages packed with historical vignettes and storylines that together make up the ornate mosaic that is the history of this city. In 'A History of Boston,' [Dain] covers everything from whaling ship financiers to Irish gangs to the birth of the biotech industry.

Jon Chesto, "Telling the Story of This City; All of It," *The Boston Globe* (March 28, 2022).

Beyond the media, subjects of the book itself have found value in Dain's authorship. Lawrence S. DiCara, former president of the Boston City Council, mayoral candidate, and author of *Turmoil and Transition in Boston*, a political memoir of the busing era, found excerpts from the book both interesting and educational. DiCara opines, "Dan Dain's massive volume regarding Boston history merits a comfortable chair, a glass of wine and a good reading light. Dan's extensive research has unearthed facts regarding Boston's history which were enlightening even to someone who has been living it, reading it and writing about it for almost three-quarters of a century."

Now in pre-publication, the manuscript has provided Dain ample material for presentations to clients, community groups, and industry associations on the history of Boston and its impact on commercial real estate. The book will include photographs by urban and architectural photographer Peter Vanderwarker. Dain expects that the book will be printed and bound for distribution in 2023.

An excerpt from Chapter 6, discussing Boston's acceptance of diverse and revolutionary ideas as a foundation for the City's place in the Industrial Revolution is provided below. Dain's colleagues at Dain Torpy are enthusiastically supportive of his herculean effort and look forward to reading the finished product.

Chapter 6: Watershed Moment Three: An Industrial Revolution

A. Foundation to an Economic Transformation

The most transformative event of nineteenth century Boston and its vicinity was the introduction of the Industrial Revolution. The rise of an economy based on manufacturing and industry coincided, albeit over a couple of decades, with the 1840s seeming to be the tipping point, with the steady decline of shipping and trade, fishing and whaling, and farming as the primary bases for the regional economy. Historian Samuel Eliot Morison described this as the shift from "wharf to waterfall." We can see the effect of the themes discussed in this book, particularly public investment, public safety, immigration, and a willingness to embrace new ideas, on this transformation. And subsequently, we can see how the new economy in the mid-nineteenth century spurred the physical transformation of Boston, with the creation of the South End, Back Bay, and other new neighborhoods; the annexation of nearby towns like Dorchester; and the growth of the streetcar and the building of the country's first subway.

The Industrial Revolution in Massachusetts starts between the years of 1810 and 1812 and an act of industrial espionage. Francis Cabot Lowell started his career firmly entrenched in the old economy. He was the son of Judge John Lowell II, a former member of the Continental Congress. After graduating from Harvard in 1793, where he was known as a math wizard, Francis Cabot Lowell secured employment as a supercargo (trader) on a ship bound for France. There, he wrote home to his father, he witnessed two men in the Exchange settle an argument by duel, the victor simply returning to his work in the Exchange after. After a few more voyages, Lowell opened a store and counting room on Long Wharf. It was the start of a successful career as a Boston merchant. He went into business with Uriah Cotting. They participated in the China trade, as well as trade with India, eventually acquiring eight merchant ships and developing India Wharf (designed by Charles Bulfinch) and later Central Wharf (with its 54 four-story warehouses) on the waterfront. In 1807, during Jefferson's trade embargo, Massachusetts Governor James Sullivan began advocating for a greater emphasis on manufacturing so as to decrease the impact of the embargo and to increase the Commonwealth's economic independence. Two years later, after the death of Sullivan, Acting Governor Levi Lincoln, Jr. helped extend bounties and tax exemptions to manufacturing plants. Diversification also started to appeal to some merchants because international trade, while highly

lucrative, was also difficult, tiring work, and reliant on risky years-long voyages to Asia and other international ports.

Lowell and Cotting saw an opportunity. During a two-year trip to England and Scotland, Lowell became interested in the operation of water- or steam-powered textile machines. To effectuate a weave, these machines' motions were complex. Their designs were closely-guarded trade secrets. Visitors to Britain's textile mills were prohibited from sketching what they saw and were searched upon leaving. Employees of the mills were even prohibited from leaving the British Isles, lest they set up competitive mills. Thus, Lowell was compelled to study the workings of the Lancashire power looms in secret, memorizing what he saw. Lowell took no notes and made no drawings of what he had seen. So careful were the British that they had searched Lowell's bags twice upon his departure. The high-level secrecy of the English textiles was both good business and part of British policy during the colonial-era. The Industrial Revolution was slow to come to America compared to England, in part because the British economy was built on using the colonies for raw materials, shipped to England to be turned into finished products, which would then be sold back to the colonies. The rise of a colonial industrial base would have directly competed against industry in England. So, if the British were not going to introduce it to America, the Americans would have to steal the secrets of industry.

On his return to Massachusetts (after his ship was diverted by the British to Halifax to be searched for evidence of smuggling of industrial plans and drawings), Lowell, with his master mechanic Paul Moody, retreated to a rented store on Broad Street. Russell B. Adams, Jr., in his book *The Boston Money Tree,* describes their efforts: "[The two] labored … at re-creating and making refinements on British spinning and weaving machinery. There, as a hired hand turned a crank to set the mechanisms in motion, Lowell and Moody tinkered into the nights, adjusting a gear here, whittling a spindle there, building models of some of the most sophisticated machinery of the time." It took more than a year of work, but they emerged with the nation's first integrated cotton spinning and weaving machine. Traditionally, weaving was performed on hand looms, often in homes. The integrated textile mill revolutionized clothing manufacturing by centralizing the process in a single location and requiring lower-skilled workers. As history professor Robert F. Dalzell, Jr. wrote in his book, *Enterprising Elite: The Boston Associates and the World They Made*: "At that point no manufacturing firm in the United States and few, if any, in England had gone as far as [Lowell and Moody had in] combining the entire process of mechanized cotton textile production – from raw material, ginned

and baled, to the finished cloth – in a single factory." Lowell formed the Boston Manufacturing Company to build his first mill on the banks of the Charles River in Waltham.

Lowell and the Boston Manufacturing Company pioneered the use of local girls, most from area farms who had experience making clothes, to work the machinery. The decline of the farming economy, and local farming families' struggle to support themselves, in the first half of the nineteenth century added to the supply of girls available for the mills. The company also built boarding houses for the mill girls to live in, close to the factory. The girls' tightly-controlled daily schedule, and strict codes of conduct, including mandatory church-attendance, became known as the Waltham-Lowell System.[1] It was, relatively, not an inexpensive system to run. Dalzell writes that the early Boston industrialists were terrified, in these years not so far removed from the French Revolution and the 1793-94 Reign of Terror, of creating an industrial proletariat in America. Lowell had seen the wretched condition of the working class in Manchester, England during his travels. Thus, these industrialists had their eye on avoiding the conditions that might give rise to labor unrest by relying on and providing for young-female workers. In many ways, it was an enlightened working environment. The boardinghouses subscribed to local newspapers and magazines, and usually were stocked with books. The girls spent their evenings reading or writing. Many formed "improvement circles," which were like book clubs. Later, in Lowell, the girls of the mills created the first magazine in the country run entirely by women, the *Lowell Offering*. On weekends, the girls went to church.

Yet, it was dangerous work in the factories. Accidents were common, cotton dust led to lung and respiratory ailments, and the noise from the power looms was deafening. The rooms were kept hot and humid to prevent the yarn from breaking.[2] Not surprisingly, worker retention was challenging; the Irish immigration in the late 1840s provided a renewed pool of employees for the mills, successively replaced by each new wave of immigrants, first the French-Canadians (the mills of Fall River would be such a draw for French Canadians that by 1900, it would have the third largest Francophone population in North America after Montreal and Quebec City), and then Greeks, Poles, Portuguese, Armenians, and others.

Lowell died at the age of 42 in 1817, but the new plant was a great success. The Boston Manufacturing Company built two more mills in Waltham in 1818 and 1820, but it soon became

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[1] English novelist Anthony Trollope described the system as "the realisation of a commercial Utopia."

[2] In 1844, women from Lowell formed the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association, the first labor union founded by women in the country.

apparent that Waltham lacked the waterpower to support further expansion of the mills there.[3] Instead, the company looked for a new location to build its next mill, with access to a more powerful stream. Led by Lowell's former merchant-partners Nathan Appleton and Patrick Jackson, the Boston Manufacturing Company's attention turned to the Merrimack River, with 20 times the flow of the Charles. They identified a location at the intersection of the Middlesex Canal and the Merrimack River in the sparsely-populated village of East Chelmsford. They quietly bought up land and soon renamed the area after their former partner. With $600,000 in capital raised in Boston, Appleton and Jackson formed the Merrimack Manufacturing Company to create what became the country's first planned industrial city, Lowell.

The Merrimack Manufacturing Company initially built seven mills along the canals in the region. The mills had similar designs, standing five stories along the water (four stories from the street) and 155 feet in length. The first floor contained the waterwheel that powered the machinery on the floors above. The company eventually built 10 more mills, and as other companies saw the success in Lowell, more mills were built in cities like Lawrence, Methuen, and Haverhill. In Western Massachusetts, Holyoke became another center for textile mills. Lawrence itself had been created as a planned mill town, with tree-lined streets and parks, in 1845 by Abbott Lawrence's Essex Manufacturing Company, and soon rivaled Lowell as a textile manufacturing center. The network of mills also supported related industries for finishing the cloth, and for manufacturing and servicing the mill equipment. By 1840, Lowell had grown to 40,000 people, making it, at the time, the second largest city in the Commonwealth. It would also become, by the 1850s, the largest industrial center in the country.

The Merrimack Manufacturing Company's most important employee was Kirk Boott, who had originally worked at the Waltham mills, before becoming the first agent and treasurer in Lowell, responsible for the day-to-day operations there. Expanding his influence in the town, Boott also got himself appointed agent for the Proprietors of Locks and Canals in Lowell, thereby giving him effective control over access to flowing water in Lowell. Today, the Boott Cotton Mill building is at the center of the Lowell National Historical Park, where one can watch demonstrations on old mechanical looms. They are very noisy.

The mills consumed vast quantities of cotton, almost all from the American South, before the Civil War picked by Black slaves on cotton plantations. The north's economy was far more

[3] The story of the Boston Manufacturing Company and the growth of the local textile industry is well told at the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation in Waltham.

intertwined with the South's slave economy than we realize today. Indeed, the timing of the rise of the northern textile industry in the 1810s was not just a product of happenstance. Massachusetts-native Eli Whitney had invented the cotton gin in Georgia in 1793, just a year after he had graduated from Yale and then moved south looking for work as a private tutor. The cotton gin revolutionized the harvesting of cotton by mechanizing and increasing the efficiency of what had previously been the tedious job of hand removing seeds from cotton. Before the invention, the cotton industry was relatively small and localized, and the product expensive. But now that cotton usable for textiles was inexpensive, international demand soared. Thus, ironically, a labor-saving device triggered a massive increase in the need to pick cotton, expanding the southern slave economy in the early nineteenth century. And Massachusetts textile mills were there to consume all that cheap cotton produced on southern plantations.

The Industrial Revolution in New England was underway. It was fueled by enormous amounts of capital. The capital came from Boston. A number of old Boston shipping families – the Cabots, Lees, Perkinses, Higginsons, and Amorys – looking to diversify after the disruptions of the 1807 Jefferson Embargo and the War of 1812, joined new industrial entrepreneurs such as Lowell, Abbot and Amos Lawrence, and Nathan and William Appleton, to create a group of about 40 families that became known as the Boston Associates. The members of the Boston Associates controlled many of the banks in Boston, created several insurance companies, and provided much of the capital, and often the ideas, for the newly growing industrial economy. Their families were known for close kinship and intermarriage (creating, as we will get to, a new "caste" called the Brahmins). The ability of Boston's financiers was aided by the establishment of the Boston Stock Exchange in 1834. The third-oldest stock exchange in the country, it was acquired by NASDAQ in 2007. To run these remote mills, the Boston Associates had to rely on nonowners, thus giving rise to a class of professional managers, an innovation at the time. Russell B. Adams, Jr. ascribes their legacy as having "fathered American big business."

As we will get to, following the rise of the textile industry and the establishment of a system for accessing capital from Boston, the region in the nineteenth century soon became a powerhouse in the manufacture of leather goods and shoes, watches, sewing machines, pianos, candy, and other goods. Harvard economist Edward Glaeser has observed that while the early textile mills needed lots of space for big factories to house big machines, and hence tended to be located outside of cities, over time in the nineteenth century, the machines, and hence the factories themselves, became smaller. Further, the rise of the use of steam engines meant that siting of factories was no longer

dependent on access to waterpower. "As a result of these changes," Glaeser writes in his paper, *Reinventing Boston: 1640-2003*, "industrial entrepreneurs didn't need to locate in empty space where land was cheap. Instead, they could locate in the heart of the city and reap the advantages of proximity to suppliers, customers, and workers." Looking ahead, this latter point is an advantage that becomes apparent again in the 1990s when companies start moving back to Boston from the suburbs.

If the Industrial Revolution in the region started with Francis Cabot Lowell and the Boston Associates, it reached its nineteenth-century peak with an immigrant from Edinburgh, Scotland. Alexander Graham Bell's mother was deaf, yet remarkably had become an accomplished pianist; his father taught phonetics and studied oration. Bell moved to Boston in 1871 to teach at the Boston School for Deaf Mutes. In 1874 he met mechanic Thomas Watson, who was from Salem, Massachusetts, and together they formed a partnership to create a machine that could transmit a human voice through a wire. They rented two rooms at 5 Exeter Street in Boston and the two pursued what was originally Bell's vision with great energy. Bell was known to regularly spend the night in the office, and he pushed himself to exhaustion. On March 10, 1875, with the two inventors in separate rooms, Bell spoke some of the most famous words of this era of innovation, into a wire: "Mr. Watson, come here—I want to see you." Watson responded: "Mr. Bell, do you understand what I say?" He did.

Bell and Watson worked on the invention for several more weeks before they thought it was ready for demonstrations within the scientific community. On May 10, Bell presented the telephone to the Academy of Arts and Sciences meeting at the Boston Athenaeum. After further work, it was ready for public display at the 1876 Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia. Knowing they were onto something potentially lucrative, Bell and his two financial supporters, Gardiner Greene Hubbard and Thomas Sanders (fathers of two of Bell's students) hoped to parlay the invention into a quick windfall. They approached the Western Union Telegraph Company, controlled by the Vanderbilt family, and offered to sell the new technology for $100,000. Western Union said no.

Rebuffed, Bell, Hubbard, and Sanders organized the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company in Boston to operate a system in New England, and the Bell Telephone Company to expand to the rest of the country. The first telephone installation was between two banks (including the Shoe and Leather Bank – great name!) and a company in Boston, allowing three-way communications.

Meanwhile, Western Union belatedly realized the potential of the new technology. It formed the American Speaking Telephone Company, buying up related telephone patents, in an effort to compete against Bell's companies. Bell's invention was superior, but his companies lacked the capital to compete against the Vanderbilts. So the Bell group approached William Forbes, son of merchant prince John Murray Forbes (who we will get to), to seek backing. Forbes acted quickly, forming a new National Bell Telephone Company with himself as president.

The race was on for national telephone hegemony; the competition got nasty. Western Union sued National Bell for patent infringement seeking to slow its advance. With Western Union distracted by its pursuit of a telephone network, robber baron Jay Gould saw an opportunity to muscle into the telegraph business, setting up the rival American Union Telegraph Company. In a pincer move, Gould also started buying up pieces of the Bell system to squeeze Western Union from both sides. Meanwhile, National Bell's counsel James Jackson Storrow Sr. was aggressively fighting off the patent suits. The Vanderbilts blinked. In 1879, they agreed to sell their telephone businesses to National Bell in exchange for 20 percent of Bell's future licensing fees and an agreement that National Bell would not compete in the telegraph field. Gould ended up buying the Vanderbilts out of Western Union and having secured that field, lost interest in his Bell investments. Suddenly National Bell out of Boston had the telephone business to itself and superior patents that would not start to expire until 1893. Seeking greater capitalization, Forbes then set up the American Bell Telephone Company still based in Boston. Nearly all its officers, directors, and investors were based in Boston. Yet in a sign of trouble ahead for Massachusetts's industrial economy, the Massachusetts General Court rejected the company's application for permission to issue additional shares of stock to raise capital for its national expansion. Instead, the company turned its national expansion over to its New York subsidiary. That company was called the American Telephone & Telegraph Company, or AT&T for short. The great expansion of a national telephone network would be run out of New York City.[4]

There is a fundamental difference between the innovation copied by Lowell in the 1810s, and Bell's innovation in the 1870s. Historically, products were made by hand in homes or on farms,

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[4] Massachusetts was the site of another telecommunications breakthrough by a European when in 1903 Guglielmo Marconi sent the first transatlantic wireless signal from an antenna he erected on a location (now part of the National Seashore) in South Wellfleet on Cape Cod, to Cornwall, England. Marconi built a wireless station at the site, later moved to Chatham in 1912, from where wireless operators alerted the RMS *Carpathia* to effect a rescue of passengers from the sinking Titanic in the north Atlantic. Marconi is generally credited with the invention of the radio. A great book about him is Erik Larson's *Thunderstruck*.

or by craftspeople, but as early as Roman times, simple machines, some powered by water, assisted in production. Even before the Industrial Revolution reached New England, the region was dotted with water-powered gristmills (for grinding wheat), sawmills (for cutting wood), and there was even a gun powder mill in Windham, Maine. These simple machines generally used an external power supply, such as water, but sometimes wind, to provide leverage to make a physical task like cutting or grinding easier or more efficient. The process, however, did not remove the importance of the craftsperson.

The early Industrial Revolution was production focused – creating bigger and better machines to make existing products (such as textiles), with lower-skilled workers manning the line or the loom. The innovations were in the machines themselves, not necessarily in the finished products. The machines were complex and typically combined several different tasks together. Even the sewing machine, which itself was a new product, was used to assist in a production that had been done by hand before. As the century progressed, innovation came to the creation of entirely new products. Bell's telephone was like nothing that had come before it. People suddenly had to have a product that they never thought they were missing.

These different types of innovations had profound consequences for the economy and for society. Both were capital intensive for building factories and for research and development. The factories needed more people than ever before to run, albeit at low wages and tough working conditions, while the process of innovation needed lots of smart people doing deep thinking and experimenting. There was also tremendous disruption in the process. Job opportunities in older industries were shrinking and the reliance on higher paying craftspeople was declining.

But despite these disruptions, Boston succeeded in its transformation and the region became, for the rest of the century at least, an industrial powerhouse. Economic opportunity led to a swelling population, complemented with immigration booms in the 1840s and again starting in the 1880s. Entire new neighborhoods were created and the city as it looks today started to appear. Boston's greatest architectural masterpieces, like Henry Hobson Richardson's Trinity Church and McKim, Meade, and White's Boston Public Library date from the second half of the nineteenth century, as do Boston's finest landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace. How did it happen?

As we learned, public and private infrastructure had been a necessary condition to Boston's agrarian, maritime, and mercantile economies to reach their peaks, but paradoxically, continued infrastructure innovations also helped trigger their decline and eclipse by the

industrial/manufacturing economy that started emerging after the opening of the textile mills at Waltham and Lowell. For example, the canals of the Middlesex Canal Corporation made bringing farm and artisan products to market much easier, but because they could channel and control water flow, they could provide the power necessary for the new textile mills, most of which were built on the canals, not on the rivers.

The introduction of the railroads had a similar dual effect. They were much cheaper to build and consumed less land than canals, and therefore they could extend into more areas, increasing the efficiency of moving goods to market, although, as we learned, they also meant that Boston as a shipping center became less important. But railroads were also essential to the rise of the industrial/manufacturing economy because they meant that factories could be located in cheap remote areas, and did not have to be physically close to rivers or their markets.

Legal and financial changes in the Commonwealth were also essential to the rise of industry in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1826, Massachusetts recognized the concept of limited liability for the shareholders of a corporation, a factor essential to being able to go to capital markets to raise equity needed to finance industrial growth. Relatedly, the colonial practice of imprisoning defaulting debtors had been relaxed by the start of the nineteenth century, and completely abolished in 1855. This made taking on debt to fund industrial innovation or expansion less risky for the borrower. Another legal advance was the development of a body of trust law after 1817, when the Supreme Judicial Court was granted equitable powers. One of the early concerns of the Boston Associates was the disruption that could occur from too regular equity sales. As a result, these early corporate investors developed the practice of passing on property through the trust vehicle, providing not just income to future generations, but corporate stability. For these families (the future Brahmins), trusts proved durable as preservers of family wealth and would be used for generations, although in future generations, conservative trustees ensured that capital was not invested in what were perceived as risky innovations.

Massachusetts was also a pioneer in recognizing workers' rights to collectively bargain. The legality of labor combinations in America was an open question when, in 1842, Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw writing for the Supreme Judicial Court in the landmark case of *Commonwealth v. Hunt* held that labor unions were lawful as long as they were organized for a lawful purpose and their means were not otherwise illegal. In the case, an employer fired a non-union employee upon threat of a strike by a workers' union. The Court ruled that the union's actions did not constitute a criminal conspiracy.

These advances in the law were part of a broad maturing of the Massachusetts legal system in the early nineteenth century. Crucial, although it seems mundane, was the hiring of an official state court reporter in 1803. With the production then of official court decisions, a body of Massachusetts legal precedent could form. This made the enforcement of laws more stable and predictable, a necessary condition to a more complex economy. By 1805, the Supreme Judicial Court was putting in place formal rules for the practice of law and a system of legal apprenticeships. That same year, future United States Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story published a book on the practice of law, providing a guide to younger practitioners. In 1817, Harvard Law School opened, the longest-continually operating school of law in the country. Its regular course of legal study also added to stability and predictability in the legal system.

While the local administration of law was maturing, the local banking system was as well after recovering from the aforementioned Dexter scandal. In 1818, the Suffolk Bank was chartered, and it quickly took on the role of the bank for other banks, acting unofficially as a regional central bank. The Suffolk Bank helped achieve currency regularity and stability. Thereafter, the number of banks in Massachusetts took off such that by 1830, Boston was second only to New York as a financial center. In just the eight years between 1829 and 1837, the number of chartered Massachusetts banks nearly doubled from 66 to 129, when a national financial panic slowed the expansion of banking. Massachusetts bankers were putting their capital to productive uses. The late Harvard historian Oscar Handlin wrote, "The power of $100,000,000 of Boston money gave Boston capitalists a solid grip upon the factories of Haverhill, of Waltham, of Lowell, and of Fall River, from which they drew a steady stream of dividends. Their money also sponsored great railroads, first across Massachusetts and New England, and finally across the whole continent."

That money would have been at risk however, in this era of frequent industrial fires, and ships lost at sea, if a regional insurance industry was not concurrently developing. Thus, the nascent Massachusetts maritime and, a little later, fire insurance industries made it much easier for businesses to raise capital (by reducing the risk on the capital). The first incorporated insurance company in Massachusetts, in 1795, was the Massachusetts Fire and Marine Company, which, despite its name, did not underwrite for fire losses. That would have to wait for the charter for the Massachusetts Mutual Fire Insurance Company, in 1798. The industrial mills of the region would nearly all be heavily insured against the risk of fire.

But for industry to really take off in the Commonwealth, it needed laborers. While Boston's population was growing because of economic opportunities, relatively low birth rates among the

Puritan descendants, and low immigration, combined to restrict the supply of inexpensive labor. As we learned about, the Waltham-Lowell System used in the mills was based on employing girls from the farms of the region. But reliance on girls from farms was limiting, especially when it became apparent that much of the work was unhealthy and dangerous. What was needed was access to large numbers of people so desperate for employment, they would take on any risk for almost any wage (Over time, fear of creating an industrial proletariat receded in the face of profit-seeking.) The masters of the mills found their labor supply in Irish immigration starting in the late 1840s.

Until this time, Boston had never attracted large numbers of immigrants, which is surprising given that Boston's sailors were meeting people from around the world. In many ways it was a cosmopolitan city, with access to the finest goods from China, India, Russia, and around the world. Yet it was culturally homogeneous, and the Puritans had been intolerant of nonconformists, as Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and Mary Dyer all learned going back to the seventeenth century. Well into the 1840s, the city remained largely of English descent, with a mixture of Scotch, Irish, Scotch-Irish, French, and German, plus Boston's small Black population.[5] There were a smattering of other nationalities in the city, but historian Oscar Handlin explains in his *Boston's Immigrants: 1790-1880*, "These foreigners, however, were just strays; and the reasons for their coming derived from personal contingencies rather than from great social causes for mass emigration. To their ranks were added from time to time, deserters from foreign ships in port, for whom American wages and American freedom weighed more heavily than the obligations of contract or the claims of loyalty."

There were crop failures in Bavaria and Baden in 1846-47 and then there was great social unrest and revolution in Germany and Poland in 1848 that unsuccessfully tried to unite different German regions, prompting large scale emigration to the United States. Available land in the

[5] In the 1720s, the largely-Protestant northern Ireland suffered from successive crop failures, livestock diseases, and unchecked inflation, compelling as many as 200,000 Ulster Irish to emigrate to North America throughout the mid-eighteenth century. Most headed to the mid-Atlantic region, and even those who settled in New England tended to keep their distance from Boston and its Puritan legacy, a place still viewed to be hostile to outsiders, even Protestant ones (although by the 1720s, there was a small Irish Presbyterian church in Boston). We are reminded today of this wave of eighteenth-century Irish immigrants in many place names around New England, like Belfast and Limerick in Maine; and Dublin and Londonderry in New Hampshire. New England is dotted with towns named after cities or countries of the world. Some were named by settlers from those places. Many were not. Peru, Maine was settled in 1821 and got its name to commemorate the South American country's recent independence from Spain. Mexico, Maine got its name for similar reasons. Poland, Maine was named for a song of that name, not the country. Lebanon, Connecticut similar was not founded by settlers from Lebanon, but by Puritans who chose a Biblical name; Lebanon, New Hampshire, in turn, was named by settlers from Lebanon, Connecticut. Norway, Maine was originally named Norage, for the Algonquin word for "falls." Town records were destroyed by fire in 1843 erasing any evidence of why the name was changed.

Midwest prompted most immigrants to bypass Boston. Handlin writes that in 1850, there were only 2,000 German immigrants in Boston; by 1865, that number had grown only to 3,790. These immigrants, mostly from larger German port cities like Bremen, were also generally educated and arrived with some capital, and thus relatively quickly found employment or established their own businesses, and therefore did not contribute materially to the available labor pool. A number of these immigrants were also Jewish, as we will get to. The experience of the great wave of Irish-Catholic immigration starting after 1845 was entirely different.

Boston had a poor history with Catholics. Puritanism itself had been created in part to banish all vestiges of Roman Catholicism from the Church of England, and in 1647, the Massachusetts General Court had taken the step of banning all Catholic priests from the colony. Men from Massachusetts had fought repeated wars against the Catholic French and their allies across northern New England and Canada, throughout most of the eighteenth century, and the anti-Catholic Pope's Day, as discussed, had been riotously celebrated each year up until the start of the Revolution (when George Washington put an end to the tradition, in part out of deference to the colonist's French allies during the struggle against Great Britain). Even the New England Primer textbook inculcated children in anti-Catholicism. Public Catholic worship in Boston would be banned until 1780. When Patrick Carr, a Catholic immigrant from Ireland, died from injuries he suffered in the Boston Massacre, there was no priest in the entire Town of Boston to preside over his burial service. Indeed, part of the tension during the occupation of Boston from 1768 to 1776 was that many of the British soldiers were Irish Catholics.

Thus, Protestant-Catholic antagonism in Boston was deep-rooted and will be a major theme in the city and this book until the end of Curleyism, as we will get to, in the 1950s. Yet the Revolutionary War softened Boston Puritan hostility toward Catholics, as the Continental Congress sought a military alliance with France. On November 2, 1788, French chaplain l'Abbé de la Poterie presided over the first recorded official Mass in Boston, before a small congregation of French and Irish Catholics. He was succeeded a year later by Father Louis de Rousselet, but his heavy French accent turned off the Irish congregants. In 1790, Rousselet was joined in Boston by Father John Thayer, a native Bostonian, raised Congregationalist, who had been ordained a Catholic priest in Europe a few years earlier. But Thayer and Rousselet were at war with each other almost as soon as Thayer arrived back in town, prompting Bishop John Carroll to intervene from Baltimore. (At the time there was only one United States diocese; Carroll would found Georgetown College in 1789.) Carroll reassigned both priests elsewhere and, in August 1792, sent in Father Francis Matignon, who

is considered the first permanent Catholic prelate in Boston. The very able Matignon had been born in Paris in 1753, and educated at the Sorbonne, before fleeing rising anti-clericalism during the French Revolution and joining Bishop Carroll in Baltimore. In 1803, he would oversee the construction of Boston's first permanent Catholic church, on Franklin Street in Downtown, to provide a place of worship for Boston's growing Catholic population, nearing a thousand people. It was designed by Charles Bulfinch (free of charge), received financial support from many leading Protestants in town, and named the Church of the Holy Cross. In 1808, Boston's diocese was created and Jean-Louis Lefebvre de Cheverus was named its first bishop. Cheverus had been a friend of Matignon's in France and had come to Boston in 1796. He would oversee the creation in 1818 of St. Augustine's Chapel and Cemetery in South Boston, the first Catholic burial ground in Boston. When Cheverus returned to France in 1823 at the urging of King Louis XVIII (where he was named cardinal shortly before his death), he was succeeded by the Jesuit Benedict Fenwick as Boston's second bishop.

The late 1820s saw a marked growth in Boston's Irish Catholic population as British land policies, particularly the Acts of Enclosure, adopted to help pay debts from the Napoleonic Wars, forced many Irish tenants from their lands. By 1830, there were nearly 8,000 Irish Catholics in Boston. Initially welcomed as a source of labor for Boston's early landfill projects, by the early 1830s, the new immigrants were increasingly viewed as competition for limited employment opportunities. Anti-Catholic sentiments were fanned by false rumors in local newspapers, an inflammatory book called *Six Months in a Convent*, and fiery sermons by the traveling preacher Lyman Beecher (father of the abolitionist author Harriet Beecher Stowe). Tensions exploded in violence the evening of August 11, 1834 when an angry Protestant mob marched to the Ursuline Convent, its location then part of Charlestown, but today part of Somerville. The convent, a Catholic cemetery, and St. Mary's Church had each opened over the preceding eight years, marking visible symbols of the growth of Catholicism in Charlestown.

The mother superior at the convent met the marchers at the entrance and asked them to disperse, which, at first, they did. But the mob regathered a few hours later, now numbering in the hundreds, carrying torches. As the nuns and their students escaped out the back, the crowd beat down the entrance and ran through the grounds torching everything they could. The mob set a large bonfire into which they tossed Bibles, furniture, documents, and anything else they could get their hands on before the flames engulfed the compound. Protestant fire companies responded, but observers noted that many of its members joined in the destruction. It was one of the most

shameful moments in the long history of the city and would reveal the truly dark side of the tribal and nativist passions that would haunt Boston for so long.

But it was far from an isolated event. Catholics in Boston were subjected to relentless harassment and abuse. Attacks on Catholic property prompted congregations around Massachusetts to hire armed guards for their churches. Protestant-Catholic violence exploded again in 1837 with a massive riot that became known as the Broad Street Riot. It started when a company of Yankee firemen returning from a fire met a procession of between 400 and 500 Irish mourners in a funeral procession on Broad Street. It was, to put it one way, a combustible collision of groups. Boston's volunteer firefighters had earned a reputation for rowdiness. These companies largely drew their ranks from Protestant working class communities that were developing resentment against newly arriving unskilled Irish laborers competing for jobs. That Boston provided compensation to only the first company to arrive at a fire scene just increased the competitiveness of these groups. For the Irish mourners, their resentment at the role the Charlestown fire companies had played three years earlier in the destruction of the Ursuline Convent had not cooled. What started with words turned into shoves and then fist fights. The volunteer firemen stated ringing their bells; soon more than 700 more firemen responded to the bells. A full-on melee ensued, with combatants swelling into the thousands grabbing whatever handheld weapons they could, hitting each other with sticks, rocks, bricks, and clubs. As the firemen's momentum surged, they started looting and torching the Irish stores and homes in the neighborhood. Boston's small and ill-prepared constabulary was completely overwhelmed. Finally, Mayor Samuel Atkins Eliot had to call out the state militia to restore order. A grand jury subsequently indicted 14 Irishmen and four of the firefighters; an all-Protestant jury found the Catholics guilty and the Protestants not guilty.

Justice was not done. And tensions were not eased. On September 12, 1837, at the annual Fall Muster on Boston Common, the city's militia companies gathered to form the traditional brigade line. Nine companies of Protestant militia companies were joined by the newly formed Irish Catholic Tenth Company of Light Infantry, known as the Montgomery Guards for Irish-born Continental Army Brigadier General Richard Montgomery, who had died in December 1775 during the American attack on Quebec. (His command was then assumed by Benedict Arnold.) In protest, six of the nine Protestant militia companies left the field, playing "Yankee Doodle," intended as an insult to the Irish militiamen. The Montgomery Guard performed their maneuvers on the Common to a jeering crowd, and then marched down Tremont Street through a gauntlet of hostile Bostonians, pelting the Irish marchers with bottles and rocks. The company made their way to their

armory in Dock Square, where they were surrounded by a crowd estimated at 3,000 people. Mayor Eliot had to hustle down to the armory to plead with the crowd to disperse. In the event's aftermath, Governor Edward Everett ordered that the six Protestant militia companies, as well as the Montgomery Guard, be disbanded. But the six mutinous militias were all allowed to then recharter. The result was that the Irish company was the only one to face a lasting punishment, for its passive tendency to incite sectarian violence on the part of others!

Bishop Fenwick for one was determined not to let the harassment of Catholics in the city go unchallenged. He sponsored lectures and founded *The Jesuit* weekly newspaper to defend the tenets of the Catholic Church, but as a public relations move, the choice of name was unfortunate, given paranoia about the Jesuits in Boston. In an effort then to expand the reach and effectiveness of his newspaper, Bishop Fenwick transferred ownership to lay publishers H.J. Devereaux and Patrick Donahoe, who changed the paper's name to *The Boston Pilot*. From 1874 to 1890, noted Irish poet John Boyle O'Reilly served as editor of the paper. It is still published today.

Protestant concern with violence took the form of an emerging temperance movement in Boston. Intoxication was seen as one of the causes of the riots, but it was also generally becoming inconsistent with the demands for timeliness and alertness in Boston's nascent manufacturing economy. The early part of the movement had focused on moderation, or avoidance of higher-alcohol spirits like whiskey and rum in favor of beer and wine, in an effort to curb drunkenness. In 1826, the American Temperance Society was formed in Boston. It soon became a national organization and cause, with over a million members. The movement's most fiery promoter was the same Rev. Lyman Beecher whose sermons had sparked anti-Catholic violence. Beecher called for total prohibition. Beecher, a Presbyterian, made it a trilogy of pet (obnoxious) causes when he also focused his sermons on railing against Unitarianism, a movement that we will get to shortly. It is somewhat remarkable that among his 13 children were several of the leading abolitionists of the time.

At any rate, it was business pressure, concerned with the destabilizing effect on commerce from violence, that ultimately prompted the city's and state's leaders to seek reforms to curb mob violence. (In another disturbing riot from a few years earlier, a mob had stormed a Female Anti-Slavery Society meeting and nearly killed abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison.) In 1838, the General Court authorized the mayor and board of aldermen to appoint daytime police officers to supplement the traditional volunteer night watch, who had proven largely inept in the face of angry mobs. In 1846, the force was reorganized and pay was standardized. In 1853, the police and the watch were

combined into the Boston Police Department, with new headquarters at City Hall, and with eight local police stations dividing up the city. The expanded and professionalized police force did much to bring a sense of calm and order to the city.

And then, in 1845, a potato fungus struck in Ireland. The starvation and deprivation that resulted would become one of the greatest tragedies of the nineteenth century. And it would forever change Boston.

The Industrial Revolution had essentially bypassed Ireland. Following the disastrous (for Ireland) Act of Union in 1800 that added Ireland to Great Britain, capital and much of the landed gentry fled the island for London, while Ireland became essentially an extraction colony of England. The Irish economy was based on tenant-farming (paying rent to farm a plot owned usually from London). A series of events would make that structure highly unstable and permit the 1845 potato blight to be the tipping point to widespread famine that would last until 1852. The Irish population by mid-century had grown large and dense, exceeding eight million people. All this competition for land acted to raise rents and make farms smaller and less sustainable. Smaller plots also made adoption of farming innovations and modernizations uneconomic because there were no economies of scale. While earlier blights had struck potatoes cultivated in soils enriched with manure and supportive of a variety of crops, by the 1840s, the soil had grown exhausted and the “lumper” potato had become the main source of food for much of the population, especially in the winter, leaving that population malnourished and vulnerable to disease.[6] Because so much of the population were tenant-farmers, the blight also made it impossible for most to pay their rent; hundreds of thousands were evicted from the land during this time, leaving them without means to feed or care for themselves.[7] Ironically, Ireland, despite the blight, continued to produce enough food to feed its population, but the English landlords exported most of the meat and produce to markets in England. Official policy of Great Britain contributed to the tragedy. Anything close to sufficient aid to Ireland, it was believed, would both disrupt the free market for corn and grain, damaging the economy of Great Britain, and would risk creating a class of peasants permanently dependent on

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[6] The small farm lot sizes contributed to the choice of potato as the main crop. In good years, potato cultivation provides higher yields than other crops, and for a single crop, potatoes are, relatively, highly nutritious, and they are easily digestible. Thus, for a tenant farmer who needs to feed his family, meet the rent, and have a little left over for necessities, the potato made sense. But potatoes have a serious drawback as a cultivated crop in the era before freezers: once harvested, potatoes could not be stored long-term. Thus, Irish farmers dependent on the potato had no stored reserves as a hedge against crop failures, and when blight destroyed the harvest, the loss was total.

[7] To ensure that evicted tenants actually left their farms, the absentee landlords often hired contractors to tear down the modest dwellings in which the tenants lived.

government aid. No, the government concluded, other than very modest and poorly conceived work programs and a series of soup kitchens (serving soup so watered down it had little nutritious effect), better to leave Ireland alone and let it figure it out. Indeed, the British official in charge of Irish famine relief, Sir Charles Trevelyan, remarked to a colleague at the time that the famine had been sent by God to teach the Irish a lesson and best not to mitigate that lesson too much. And then the winter of 1846-47 was bitterly cold and snowy. Deeply malnourished and underclothed, the population was highly susceptible to diseases. A "fever" raced across the country with devastating effect. Medical personnel trying to respond to the epidemic fell victim in large numbers, exacerbating the problem. Death was everywhere.

As initial reports reached Boston of a growing famine in Ireland, Boston's still relatively small Irish-Catholic community did what it could to help the old country, raising money for famine relief. The community's fundraising appeal was largely internal. This was the era of Daniel O'Connell's nationalist movement in Ireland, which sought the repeal of the Act of Union, and thus the Catholic community feared that a wider appeal for support would be unpopular in Yankee Boston.[8] That changed in January 1847 when the packet ship *Hibernia* arrived in Boston Harbor bringing news of unspeakable suffering in Ireland. Soon more ships were arriving in Boston packed with immigrants fleeing the famine (more on their passage in a bit). The full extent of the horrors of famine started to sink in. In one of the great moments in Boston history, the city, at all levels, rose to the occasion. The story is told by the great Boston historian Stephen Puleo in his *Voyage of Mercy: The USS Jamestown, the Irish Famine, and the Remarkable Story of America's First Humanitarian Mission*. Recognizing the crisis in Ireland, leading Massachusetts citizens like Senator Daniel Webster and future Senator Charles Sumner led the call for action. But it was not a top-down movement. Puleo writes, "Ordinary Boston citizens also picked up the cry for residents of all backgrounds and faiths to come together to address a crisis unlike any they had seen." On February 18, 1847, as many as 5,000 people packed Faneuil Hall to hear the call for the citizens of Boston, the city of the Puritans, to come to the aid of a Catholic country across an ocean. Harvard president and former Massachusetts governor Edward Everett gave the final appeal of the night: "[All food sources] have been exhausted, and now famine in all its horrors stalks through the land. How is the want to be

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[8] Boston's Irish-Catholic community would long have a close relationship with the nationalist and then republican movements in Ireland. In June 1919, Eamon De Valera, the head of Republican political party Sinn Fein, triumphantly visited Boston, packing 50,000 people into Fenway Park to hear his plea for American support for Irish independence from Great Britain. In the 1980s, Irish-American mobster Whitey Bulger and his South Boston associates were accused of smuggling seven tons of weapons to the Irish Republican Army.

supplied? How are the horrors of general starvation to be staved off?" Everett provided the answer, and it is the foundation of philanthropy to this day. "[E]very community, every individual can do something," and these somethings would add up to everything. Puleo continues, "Bostonians of all stripes responded with outsized, unbridled, and nearly unanimous warmth and generosity." The New England Committee for the Relief of Ireland and Scotland (the blight had reached Scotland as well, although not to the same extent as in Ireland) was organized and started taking in small donations from across the city. It became a model for charitable giving for humanitarian causes that we still see in community-wide events like the annual Walk for Hunger and the Pan Mass Challenge (although those events are paired with some specific fundraising mechanism – the walk or the ride).

But there was a fundamental challenge for the appeal. Sending money to Ireland to help buy food during a period of scarcity when profiteers were hoarding food supplies might make a few people in Ireland rich, but would not likely help feed too many people. No, to be effective, the food would need to be donated or purchased in the United States and then shipped to Ireland. But how? Large seaworthy ships were not just sitting around available for charitable use. And who would sail the ship? Robert Bennet Forbes, one of the most fascinating China traders of the early nineteenth century (more about him later), had an idea: what if he could convince the United States Navy to lend him a ship for free and he would captain it? Forbes did not exactly pick an auspicious time to ask; the United States was at war with Mexico and the Navy was deploying all the ships it could get. But there was one bit of luck: the most active and important Navy yard in the country was right there on Boston Harbor, the Charlestown Navy Yard. Surely they could find an extra ship in Charlestown that the Navy could spare for a few months. Forbes got textile magnate Abbott Lawrence to back his idea and they then approached Mayor Josiah Quincy. They had a particular vessel in mind. The *USS Jamestown*, a 163-foot, six-inch sloop-of-war had launched just three years earlier from Virginia and was in drydock in Charlestown for repairs. It looked to be close to being seaworthy again. But to be able to credibly ask to borrow a Navy ship during wartime and then sail it back and forth across the North Atlantic in early spring, they would need someone with federal pull; they enlisted the help of Congressman Robert C. Winthrop. After considerable debate, and much trepidation, the Navy agreed, but Secretary of the Navy John Y. Mason issued a warning to Forbes: "Any disaster to the ship while in your hands would be a source of regret to you." They had their ship; now they needed to provision it.

Food and clothing donations flooded in from across New England. Puleo writes that about 800 tons of "meal, corn, bread, beans, beef, pork, peas, hams, oatmeal, dried apples, flour, potatoes,

rice, rye, wheat, fish, clothing, and other supplies" were packed into 8,000 barrels to be loaded onto the USS *Jamestown*. To save on overhead, Forbes advertised for an all-volunteer crew. While he was able to find some seasoned officers, the rest of the members of the team were notable for being more willing than ready for a transatlantic voyage. They departed on March 28, 1847 and they encountered every type of North Atlantic condition, including snow, fog, ice, and gale-force winds. But under Forbes's able hands, the *Jamestown* made strong progress and pulled into Cork Harbor on April 12, greeted by a huge cheering crowd. Forbes was met in Cork by Father Theobald Mathew who gave him a tour of the area. Forbes would write that he was horrified at the death and dying he witnessed all around. Forbes saw the great need of the people but also the challenge of distributing so limited an amount of food compared to the great need. Mathew argued that the provisions be made available only to the people of Cork itself, lest they attract people from across the region competing for the limited supply. Others argued for a broader distribution policy. Cork officials finally settled on a grid system which divided the county into 160 sections of about three-square miles each, to which the supplies would be evenly divided.

Upon his return to the United States, Ben Forbes hurried to New York to help provision the USS *Macedonian,* another sloop loaned by the United States Navy readying to head to Ireland with additional relief supplies. Donations from the United States would continue to be sent to Ireland over the next several years, undoubtedly saving countless lives, but the devastation to Ireland had been done. In all, more than one million Irish died in the famine, and as many as two million left the country. Many seeking to escape the island had never traveled far from their villages. An industry of travel facilitators sprung up, but many of these brokers were unscrupulous and took advantage of the emigrants, taking excessive cuts on passenger tickets, supplies, and temporary housing during the voyage. For those fleeing, some sailed directly from Dublin or Cork for America, but most stopped first in England (usually in Liverpool), where they found themselves exploited and discriminated against, and then continued on to America on a packet (regularly scheduled) ship, principally to Boston, New York, and Canada, although many arriving in Canada did not wish to stay in a British dominion, and therefore soon continued on to points south. Boston received a far larger share of the Irish diaspora in the 1840s, compared to New York, than it did of the Jewish, Italian, and other southern and eastern European waves of immigrants starting in the 1880s, because in the 1840s and 1850s, Boston sailing ships were still dominant and passenger fares and crossing times from Liverpool to Boston were lower and quicker than to New York. For most of the immigrants, all remaining meagre savings were spent on the passage.

Conditions on the ships from England were abominable. The vessels were variously referred to as famine ships or coffin ships. The descriptions were not inaccurate. They were unimaginably cramped, dirty, and filled with disease. With no means for the passengers to change their clothing or bedding, the ships were breeding grounds for lice and typhus. And dysentery was common from undercooked and contaminated food, when food and water were provided at all. On one ship, 158 passengers died during the journey. Frequent North Atlantic storms and the perils from icebergs made the trip all the more terrifying. In 1849, four immigrant ships sank from iceberg strikes with hundreds lost. That year also saw 99 Irish immigrants drowned when their ship, the *St. John*, foundered on the rocks along the coast of Cohasset in a storm. To brave the cold of the North Atlantic passage, passengers often lit fires on the decks, which led to dangerous deck fires. Those disembarking in Boston were not greeted with much improved conditions, if they could get into the city at all. Those arriving in Boston sick were sent to quarantine on Deer Island. And this brings us to the great irony of Boston's heroic relief efforts for the people of Ireland. Proper Bostonians rose to the occasion to help people who, ultimately, were someone else's problem. But when these same people arrived on the shores of the Shawmut peninsula, with needs nearly as great as those starving in the mother country, Proper Boston turned its back on them. It is hard to know if any of the relief efforts were intended to convince the Irish *not* to emigrate in the first place. If that was felt by those giving the philanthropy, it does not appear to have been publicly articulated. But this is a theme we will revisit. For example, Boston's nineteenth century white abolitionists and twentieth century civil rights proponents have long been accused of caring more for the plight of Blacks everywhere but in Boston.

At any rate, Boston was ill-equipped to handle the massive influx of new arrivals from Ireland, many sick, malnourished, and lacking in job skills. Nearly 100,000 Irish immigrants arrived in Boston in the last five years of the 1840s alone, lacking resources to continue into the land-rich Midwest as the contemporary German and Scandinavian immigrants were doing. The new Irish arrivals had two immediate needs: housing and employment. They crowded into tenements and shanties near the waterfront, mostly in the North End and the Fort Hill area.[9] In Charlestown, immigrants crowded along Warren Avenue, giving it the name Dublin Row. A three- or four-story building might house 100 people, with little access to running water, creating conditions for disease.

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[9] In tenement buildings, typically each unit was only one or two rooms, and rooms were multipurpose (cooking, working, and sleeping might all happen in the same space). Rest facilities were shared among multiple families, in this era likely in a privy outside, and later, in a shared indoor toilet.

Finding jobs was also critical. Most of the arrivals had been farmers, but they now found themselves in an urban environment to which they were poorly suited. They lacked marketable skills or capital to help start businesses. A deep and long-lasting nativist backlash, that we'll get to in more detail below, did not help; "Irish need not apply" signs sprouted around the city.[10] Slowly, the immigrants found menial jobs around the city where they could. Historian Oscar Handlin writes in *Boston's Immigrants: 1790-1880*, "Tramping the crooked streets from shop to shop, they might, if they were fortunate, find someone to use their heavy labor. Frequenting the docks, watching the arrival of ships from across the water, they sometimes met a short-handed stevedore boss or wharfinger." Others found odd jobs cleaning stables or working on municipal projects. The building trades started opening to the Irish. Between 1846 and 1848, almost 3,000 Irish immigrants helped dig the trenches and build Boston's first municipal water aqueduct. With income so unreliable, it was essential that as many members of the family as could work. Irish girls started to find employment as domestic servants. By 1850, over 2,000 of them were so employed.[11]

But soon, a class of employers saw the potential in this rapidly growing pool of unskilled labor. For the mill owners and new industrialists, all this cheap labor would be transformative. The women of Lowell and other mill towns had started to rebel at their low wages and poor working conditions. In 1845, Sarah Bagley formed the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association. Rather than negotiate with their long-standing employees, the owners replaced them, with Irish labor.

A wave of new machinery combined with cheap labor meant that products for the first time could be produced at low costs in large volumes. As we will get to, it happened in the shoe industry, with new manufacturing equipment transforming a household economy to an industrial one, with factories opening in places like Lynn and Quincy. The invention of the sewing machine in 1846 by Elias Howe in Cambridge meant that finished clothing could be made on an assembly line rather than by individual highly-skilled tailors. Sugar refining changed from a small skilled occupation to a factory-scaled process. John Souther's Globe Locomotive Works alone would turn out locomotives, steam shovels, tunnel boring equipment, and dredging machines to be used in a variety of industries. As Handlin writes, "in the two decades after 1845 the Irish energized all aspects of industrial

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[10] In his memoir, written with William Novack, long-time Congressman Tip O'Neill wrote about the small signs in many business windows in Boston in the 1920s that said "NINA," which, he noted, "as we all knew, meant No Irish Need Apply," so those signs were a long tradition in Boston.

[11] Massachusetts was a pioneer in the study of employment as a measure of the health of the economy. It 1869, it became the first state with a Bureau of Statistics of Labor. The term "unemployment" was first used in the United States in the Bureau's 1887 Annual Report.

development in Boston by holding out to investors magnificent opportunities for profits from cheap labor costs. The total of industrial employees doubled between 1845 and 1855, and again between 1855 and 1865." The work was brutal. It was often unsafe and unhealthy; the seemingly endless supply of replacement labor gave owners little incentive to improve working or safety conditions. Fifteen-hour workdays, seven days a week were common for the laborers in the mid-nineteenth century. Boston historian Thomas O'Connor has observed that deaths from industrial accidents were common, with devastating consequences to the wives and children left behind. To survive, the wives found domestic work. As for the children, O'Connor writes, they "accepted their responsibilities to help maintain the family as a fact of life – the inevitable consequences of living in this 'vale of tears.' They went out into the streets at the age of five or six to peddle newspapers, run errands, shine shoes, pick coal, or rummage through the junkyards for salable items. At the age of twelve or thirteen, they usually left school and took on full-time jobs handling freight on the piers or carrying hods of bricks on construction projects."

Nevertheless, by the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, Boston had the infrastructure (canals and railroads, banks, legal system) to support a regional manufacturing and industrial economy. It had relative stability (newly professionalized police and fire) to help attract investment. And it had a labor force to fill the factories. But as discussed in the introduction to this book, those factors alone cannot explain a period of near constant invention and innovation. For that, economists like Francesca Gino theorize, a region needs rebel thinkers. For Boston to enter its industrial golden age, it needed people willing to take risks, to question orthodoxy, and to try new things. Out of endless curiosity would come invention.

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Puritan Boston would not have been a leading candidate to usher in the American Industrial Revolution. A lot was about to change. Boston was soon to become the intellectual capital of the new country and would earn the moniker "Athens of America," first used to describe Boston by writer William Tudor in an 1819 letter.

But first, the conservative Puritan grip on the city had to be loosened further. For that, a pastor named William Ellery Channing is often given credit. Upon his ordination as a Congregational minister in 1803, Channing was called as pastor of the Federal Street Church in Boston. There, Channing's sermons questioned some of the Congregational orthodoxies. As we've learned, the Puritans had preached of an all-powerful, and wrathful, God; that man was born into sin and that the doctrine of predestination instructed that God had already decided who would be saved and who would be damned. By the eighteenth century, however, some of the teachings of Sir

Isaac Newton had reached the American colonies, that while God may have created a universe, God also established natural laws under which the universe operated without direct interference from a deity. To Channing, God was essentially good, and all souls had the ability to attain salvation. Because Channing and his followers insisted on the unity of God, God as one being, as opposed to the Trinity, they became known as Unitarians.

Channing's movement spread across the city. In 1805, a Unitarian, Henry Ware, was named Chair of Divinity at Harvard College. Within ten years, most Congregational congregations around Boston had become Unitarian. By 1826, when the American Unitarian Association formed, there were 120 Unitarian churches in Massachusetts. The appeal of the new faith was particularly strong among the social and financial elite of Boston.[12] With official Boston giving the imprimatur to questioning existing orthodoxies, an era of intellectual curiosity and risk-taking spread through almost every aspect of Boston and Massachusetts society. As nineteenth-century theologian James Freeman Clarke put it: "The group of leaders who surrounded Dr. Channing had, with him, broken forever the fetters of Calvinistic theology. These young people were trained to know that human nature is not totally depraved. They were taught that there is nothing of which it is not capable. From Dr. Channing down, every writer and preacher believed in the infinite power of education… For such reasons, and many more, the young New Englanders of liberal training rushed into life, certain that the next half century was to see a complete moral revolution in the world."

Advances in medicine both reflected this period of investigation and made for a healthier society less preoccupied with personal conditions. Residents of colonial Boston had been subject to periods of smallpox, yellow fever, dysentery, and malaria. Not until 1782 did Boston get its first medical school, at Harvard, thanks to the efforts of John Warren, brother of Revolutionary-War hero Dr. Joseph Warren. The school was moved from Cambridge to Boston in 1810 to better serve physicians based in the bigger town. The next year, the General Court granted a charter for the incorporation of the state's first general hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, with support from many of the leading merchant families; Francis Cabot Lowell was an original member of its

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[12] It was a time of other religious exploration. For a brief period in the early 1840s, there was a spike in interest in Shakerism in Massachusetts. The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing was founded in England in 1772 by Mother Ann Lee. Its followers were known to fall into ecstatic states during worship and to break out into wild dances, earning them the name Shakers. Lee came to America in 1774, leading a group of missionaries to Harvard, Massachusetts in 1781. The Shakers became known for their simple and clean communal living and managed to convert thousands at its peak, yet its belief in celibacy limited its potential. The beautiful Hancock Shaker Village in the Berkshires can be visited today, while the surviving Shaker structures in Harvard now comprise a protected Historic District. Shaker aesthetics survive to today in the continued popularity in Shaker-style furniture.

board of trustees. The hospital opened in the West End (then known as West Boston) in a building by Charles Bulfinch in 1821 and would go on to pioneer many great medical innovations, as discussed further below.[13] Massachusetts was also home to the nation's first nursing school, founded in 1872 by Dr. Susan Dimock at the New England Hospital for Women and Children (later renamed the Dimock Community Health Center). Its first graduate and, as such, the first professionally-trained American nurse was Linda Richards. Richards then traveled to England to train further under Florence Nightingale (who became famous for her nursing work during the Crimean War in the 1850s), before returning to the United States, where she went on to found nursing programs around the country, and in Japan.

Boston also would be a center of innovation in the care and treatment of persons with disabilities or mental illnesses. In 1839, Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe founded a school for the blind in South Boston, financed by a generous donation from Colonel Thomas Perkins. Howe gained renown in part for the trailblazing work he did with deaf-mute and blind child Laura Bridgman, helping her to learn language and to communicate.[14] The school would later be named for Perkins and move to Watertown, but it would remain a national leader in the field of education for the blind.[15] Gridley was also a pioneer in working with the deaf community, with a focus on using speech rather than manual sign language.

As for the care of the mentally ill, historically many wound up in jails and poorhouses. In 1818, McLean Asylum for the Insane, today McLean Hospital, opened as the first hospital in New England dedicated to the treatment of the mentally ill. Located in the part of Charlestown that is now in Somerville, it quickly earned a reputation for its high standard of care, as well as attention to sanitary conditions. In 1841, Dorothea Dix embarked on a study of the state's treatment of the mentally ill, culminating in a Memorial she presented to the General Court in 1843 that decried the

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[13] The professionalizing of the medical profession helped lead to more widespread and successful treatments or vaccinations against smallpox, malaria, and yellow fever. However, tuberculosis remained a major killer in the first half of the nineteenth century, while Boston also dealt with periodic cholera epidemics, which would become exacerbated during the two big periods of immigration in the mid- and late parts of the century.

[14] Reports of the school's successful work with Laura Bridgman reached Kate Keller in Alabama in 1886. Keller had a then six-year-old blind and deaf daughter named Helen. Keller reached out to the school's director Michael Anagnos, who asked 20-year-old blind alumnus of the school Annie Sullivan, daughter of Irish immigrants to Boston, to become Helen Keller's instructor. They would work together for the next 50 years. Keller, of course, went on to become the first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree (from Radcliffe College in Cambridge) and a noted political activist and author.

[15] Boston's place as a pioneer in the care of the visually impaired continues to this day. In the 1970s, MIT-grad Raymond Kurzweil invented the Kurzweil Reading Machine to scan and then read out loud documents. Kurzweil has continued to make advances in reading technology. A prolific inventor, Kurzweil has also been a pioneer in the development of musical synthesizer technologies.

too-frequent inhumane use of cages, chains, and other forms of physical and mental abuse of this particularly vulnerable population. She also protested the mixing of the mentally ill with the incarcerated criminal population. With the support of a young lawyer named Charles Sumner, Dix succeeded in securing additional state funding for improved care. By the second half of the nineteenth century, a series of mental-health institutions were opened around the region in places like Worcester, Danvers, Northampton, and Medfield, with public support. The construction of many of these institutions was influenced by the writings of Philadelphia doctor Thomas Story Kirkbride, who advocated that mental-health facilities segregate patients by sex and the severity of the illness. He advocated for a bat-wing design with a main center and two angled wings. The design also emphasized access to light and air. What was built under this design was often spectacular. These commissions attracted top architects from around the country. Noted nineteenth-century Worcester architect Elbridge Boyden designed the State Lunatic Hospital at Taunton (later, the Taunton State Hospital) in 1851 in a monumental Italianate-style with a grand dome. The Worcester Lunatic Asylum (later, the Worcester State Hospital) was completed in 1876 in an imposing Gothic style designed by Boston architect Frank Weston. But most impressive of all was the 1878 Gothic castle of the State Lunatic Hospital at Danvers (later, the Danvers State Hospital) designed by Boston architect Nathaniel Jeremiah Bradlee. While Kirkbride provided the dominant style of the period, some of these new institutions, such as the Medfield Insane Asylum (later, the Medfield State Hospital), established in 1892, followed the Cottage Plan system with its college campus feel with multiple smaller buildings. These buildings, both under the Kirkbride style and the Cottage Plan, were all state of the art in the nineteenth century, housing cutting edge mental health care. They would not stay that way, as we will get to.

As the Industrial Revolution rose and new population centers grew around the mills, Boston became a pioneer, by necessity, in the emerging health-related fields of environmental science and sanitary engineering. While industrialism generated wealth on an unprecedented scale and ushered in what we recognize as modern society, it left in its wake a dirty and unhealthy landscape. We have already addressed some of these problems. Dams built to drive water mills flooded farmers' fields and cut off anadromous fish such as salmon and shad from their spawning grounds upstream, causing their polutions to plummet. Fishways around the dams had worked in the era of earthen, stone, or log dams built to support the small gristmills and sawmills of colonial New England, but not the industrial-sized dams of this new era. The discharge of waste and ever higher volumes of sewage from the mills and mill towns directly into waterways killed marine life and sickened people

downstream. It got worse as the nineteenth century progressed. One change was just the volume of industry. For example, John Cumbler in his book *Reasonable Use: The People, the Environment, and the State, New England 1790-1930* catalogued the sheer number of different industries in just one growing industrial town, Chicopee, as of 1876: "[The town] housed 18 cotton mills, 6 gas works, a bleaching works, a hat works, 3 tanneries, and 34 sawmills and gristmills, all together employing some 8,984 workers, who disposed of their wastes in privies over ditches that eventually emptied either into the Chicopee or the Connecticut River…."

Industrial waste was added to the human waste. Textile mills, which one might not think of as major polluters, used a variety of chemicals later discharged into waterways. Cumbler writes that, "The major dye pollutants generated in New England's cotton mills in the nineteenth century were madder, peachwood, logwood, sumac, cow dung, starch, and British gum. The major chemicals used were sulfuric acid, muriatic acid, soda ash, bleaching powder, lime, soap, and arsenate of soda." In a single year, just one average-sized New England textile mill used hundreds of thousands of pounds of these chemicals, which would then be flushed out in hundreds of millions of gallons of polluted water, discharged into the nearest river or stream. And wool textile mills were worse than the cotton ones. Cumbler walks through the many steps of transforming raw wool into a textile. Here is his description of just one step: "The woven cloth was next washed in a mixture of urine, pigs' blood, pigs' dung, and soda. It was then fulled in a soap wash, and fullers earth, which in turn had to be washed out." And, not surprisingly, the many tanneries around the region supporting New England's leather industry, were worse still. Cumbler again: "To prepare raw leather, nineteenth-century workers soaked it in vats of tannic acid made from the sumac trees. Wastes from tanneries contained not only tannic acid but also organic materials and salts from the hides." When local rivers flooded in the spring, these industrial wastes would be spread across farmers' fields downstream. Metalworking and brass factories dumped not just chemicals, but filings and suspended metals into waterways. And then, by the 1870s, industry, the railroads, and even private homes turned from wood to coal as a source of fuel, dramatically increasing air pollution.

People started making the connection between human and animal health and pollution. Statistician Lemuel Shattuck of Boston documented the correlation between polluted living areas and incidence of disease. Shattuck showed mortality rates in Boston had been rising in conjunction with increases in pollution. Doctor Edward Jarvis of Dorchester documented that the towns in Massachusetts with the highest mortality rates were the most industrial ones. In 1850, Shattuck presented a report to Massachusetts Governor George Briggs urging that measures be adopted to

clean up the state's air and waters. Little direct action immediately followed. But it was coming, thanks in part to the work of a number of advocates in the state.

Theodore Lyman III was an unlikely environmentalist, as he was an investor in several textile mills. He was the grandson of a wealthy China trader, and son of a former Boston mayor and state representative. But despite his financial interest in the prosperity of the state's mill economy, Lyman also enjoyed the very nineteenth-century belief that science and reason could solve any problem. This was the age when the Swiss-born scientist Louis Agassiz was rising to prominence at Harvard in the field of natural science and changing the way people thought about the earth[16], while his Harvard colleague Asa Gray became the most noted botanist of the nineteenth century. Appointed over time to several different commissions formed to investigate the problems caused by sewage and pollution, particularly on the state's waterways, Lyman developed a series of suggestions, from better fishways to state-run fish hatcheries to stock the state's waters. This effort led to the creation of the country's first public fish hatchery, a shad station, located on the Connecticut River at Hadley Falls. But Lyman's most enduring legacy was his advocacy for state regulation of the environment. While no far-reaching regulations emerged directly from Lyman's advocacy, the notion that private actions can create public negative externalities (put another way, the privatizing of profits, but the socializing of environmental harm) that require public regulation was a revolutionary concept in the nineteenth century.[17] Lyman would leave it to others, however, to effectuate these ideas.

Henry Ingersoll Bowditch was another unlikely advocate. He was the son of the famous ship captain Nathaniel Bowditch, known as the founder of modern maritime navigation. The son, Henry, who earned a medical degree from Harvard in 1832, became one of the era's great radicals, first as an abolitionist, and then in the field of public health. He saw contaminated water, air, and soil as public health issues that required a state medical response. His work led to the creation in 1869 of the Massachusetts State Board of Health. Bowditch then turned his attention to the unhealthy condition of Boston's tenement districts. In 1871, he organized the Boston Co-operative Building Company whose mission was to build model housing.

The 1870s saw the entire field of health transformed through pioneering research being done by scientists in Europe, most notably Louis Pasteur, which led to the creation of the germ theory of disease. This brings us to Ellen H. Swallow Richards, one of the most remarkable people in the city's

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[16] Agassiz was the most celebrated scientist of the age, but his record is tarnished by his attempt to use science as a justification for racism and his critique of Darwinism.

[17] The era did recognize nuisance lawsuits as a means for imposing liability upon polluters, but these were extremely difficult to prove.

history. She was born in Dunstable, Massachusetts in 1842 and graduated from Vassar College in 1870 as the first woman in the nation with a degree in chemistry. She then applied to further study chemistry at the then all-male Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After some debate, she was accepted as a special student (so that no precedent was set for the general admission of women), becoming the first woman ever to study at MIT. Richards then turned her focus to issues of public health and sanitation, particularly air and water quality. She understood that if germs could be removed from water, it would benefit public health. Her work led to the country's first water-quality standards and the first modern sewage treatment plant, built in Lawrence. Using sand filters, as much as 90 percent of bacteria could be removed from river water. Almost immediately, mortality in the area from typhoid dropped 40 percent. The City of Brockton soon followed with even larger and more complex drinking water filtration and sewage purification systems. Brockton collected sewage in a reservoir and then pumped it through sand, leaving a layer of waste on top that was exposed to air and sun to kill the bacteria, and then reused as fertilizer. These breakthroughs, although they failed to stop industries from polluting, mitigated the effects of the pollution to an extent that made it possible for urban populations to explode by the end of the nineteenth century, due to the concentration of urban jobs, the decline of the agrarian economy, and the dramatic rise in immigration, as we will get to.

Ellen Richards then shifted her research on sanitation to the home, writing books and articles on the chemistry of home cooking and cleaning, helping to establish the field of home economics. In 1909, she was appointed the first president of the American Home Economics Association. Richards was also involved in the introduction of a nutritious school lunch program in Boston high schools in 1894. Nevertheless, one can draw a line from Richards' scientific approach to home cooking and the rise of industrially produced foods in the twentieth century. Today her home in Jamaica Plain, which Richards had used for much of her home economics research, such as the use of traps to prevent the mixing of fresh and wastewater, and the replacement of lead pipes, is a National Historic Landmark.

The period also saw greater understanding of food safety. In reaction to reports of widespread adulterated (and dangerous) milk in the Commonwealth, in 1856, Massachusetts adopted the country's first pure milk law. In 1859, Boston was conducting regular milk inspections.

Boston was also, of course, a pioneer in public education and educational innovation. This went back to the earliest colonial period and the establishment of the first public school in America, Boston Latin School in 1635, as well as the first free taxpayer-supported public school in America,

the Mather School (named for Puritan minister Richard Mather), which opened in Dorchester, where Mather, preached in 1639. In 1647, the General Court passed legislation requiring that all townships with more than 100 families establish a grammar school. There would be further legislative reform in 1789 with the passage of a law requiring every township to establish primary and grammar schools open to all children and overseen by elected local school committees.[18] And later, in 1821, the first free public high school in the country, the English Classical School, soon renamed as the English High School, opened in Boston.

Yet, this system of public education in Massachusetts still led to unsatisfactory educational outcomes. There was little professional teacher training or education, and both the funding for and instruction in area schools varied widely. A leading advocate for educational reform was state legislator Horace Mann of Franklin, Massachusetts, who saw through an education bill establishing a state board of education. Horace Mann himself became secretary of the new board when it was stablished in 1837. For the next decade, Mann devoted himself to transforming the Massachusetts school system. He worked tirelessly to increase state financial support for schools, raising teacher salaries, and helping build 50 new schools in the Commonwealth. His reforms included a mandated minimum school year length, the division of students into grades, improved teacher training (he helped found the first "normal school" or teachers' college in the country), and the discouragement of corporal punishment. Historian Paul Johnson credits Mann with having reorganized "the entire primary and secondary education system of the state," and set a model for the rest of the country, both as to the quality of education and the principle that every American child is entitled to an education at public expense.[19]

Mann later succeeded John Quincy Adams in Congress before moving to Ohio in 1852 to become the first president of Antioch College, where he continued as a leader in educational

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[18] Widely distributed to schools around New England were a series of elementary-school books – *Spelling Book*, *Reader*, and *Grammar for Schools* – written by Noah Webster of Connecticut in the 1780s. In 1806, Webster published his first dictionary, which went far in standardizing spelling of English in America. Webster's dictionaries sold somewhere in the range of a hundred million copies by the end of the nineteenth century alone, making it the second best-selling book, after the Bible, in America. Webster appears to have been quite the character. Author Bill Bryson describes him: "[He] was by all accounts a severe, correct, humorless, religious, temperate man who was not easy to like, even by other severe, religious, temperate, humorless people. A provincial schoolteacher and not-very-successful lawyer from Hartford (and one of the founders of Amherst College), he was short, pale, smug, and boastful." Yet his work was a masterpiece. After his death, the job of keeping Webster's dictionary updated and current fell to brothers Charles and George Merriam of Springfield, Massachusetts.

[19] Massachusetts was aided in its ability to educate its youth by the state's relative population density in the nineteenth century. In the mid-nineteenth century, Massachusetts had nearly ten-times the density of a state like Virginia. Proximity made universal education far easier to accomplish.

innovation, creating work coops as part of the curriculum and accepting African American students. At the school's 1859 commencement, Mann told the students, "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity." Minister, social reformer, and writer Edward Everett Hale joined Mann in Massachusetts as a voice for educational reform. He was highly critical of traditional rote learning which did not develop critical thinking; Hale advocated instead for learning through experimentation.

Horace Mann's sister-in-law, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, would also be an influential educational reformer. In 1859, she formed the first kindergarten in the United States, following the movement that originated in Germany. The mid-nineteenth century also saw other innovations in education. At the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education, established in today's West Roxbury in 1841 as part of George and Sophia Ripley's Brook Farm utopian society, educators employed progressive child-centered teaching methods in the morning, before the students worked on the farm in the afternoon (Nathaniel Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller, and Bronson Alcott all spent time working there). In downtown Boston, Bronson Alcott founded the Temple School where he focused on engaging with students in the learning process through use of the Socratic Method rather than the traditional approach of rote memorization. Alcott had also founded, in 1843, the Fruitlands in Harvard, Massachusetts, as a utopian agrarian commune. It lasted all of half-a-year. The land was later purchased by Clara Endicott Sears, who opened it as a museum in 1914.

It was in this setting that a new generation of revolutionary thinkers emerged. They were led by a man named Ralph Waldo Emerson and they would become known as the transcendentalists. The movement grew out of Unitarianism, was first widely articulated in a famous speech Emerson gave in 1837 at the Harvard Divinity School, and found a source for dissemination through the publication of the journal, *The Dial*, edited by Margaret Fuller and printed at Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's press in the backroom of a bookstore she owned on West Street. The core of their philosophy, notes historian Thomas O'Connor in *The Athens of America*, was a belief in the divine goodness of human nature, to be manifested "not in scripted studies, in elaborate ritualism, or in pious doctrines, but in the application of moral principles and eternal truths to uplifting human spirit and in caring for the needs of the oppressed and the disadvantaged." Its proponents grew to include such literary and intellectual figures as Henry David Thoreau (who famously spent a year living at, and writing about, Walden Pond in Concord[20], and nearly as famously spent a night in jail for

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[20] Thoreau's cabin site, today marked with stones, can be visited at Walden Pond, as well as a replica of his cabin located off of the parking lot.

refusing to pay taxes to support the Mexican War, about which he wrote *Resistance to Civil Government*), Amos Bronson Alcott (educational pioneer) and his daughter Louisa May Alcott (author of the book *Little Women*), Theodore Parker (abolitionist minister), George Ripley (social reformer, minister, and journalist), and Walt Whitman (poet, *Leaves of Grass*). While today transcendentalism is thought of as something of a benign curiosity, it was radical in its way and its time. In her book *Boston: A Social History*, Brett Howard writes that transcendentalism was a subversive movement. "It faced an orthodox conformity with vigorous and determined rebellion and was the first of a succession of revolts by youthful Americans against the complacency of their elders." Certainly, Thoreau's *Resistance to Civil Government*, known simply as *Civil Disobedience* for short, in which Thoreau argued that individuals have a duty not to acquiesce to unjust governments, has had a long impact beyond its time. Both Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. wrote about how the book influenced their political philosophies. King Jr. wrote in his *Autobiography* that, "I became convinced that noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. No other person has been more eloquent and passionate in getting this idea across than Henry David Thoreau…. The teachings of Thoreau came alive in our civil rights movement; indeed, they are more alive than ever before."

While Concord was the center of the movement, Beacon Hill was the home to a remarkable number of mid-nineteenth century writers and thinkers.[21] The poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow ("Paul Revere's Ride") lived on Cedar Street; physician, poet, man of letters, and father of a future influential Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. lived on Bosworth Street and later on Charles Street; the author of the Battle Hymn of the Republic, Julia Ward Howe, lived with her husband Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe on Chestnut Street. Novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne (*The Scarlett Letter, The House of the Seven Gables*) lived for a time in the 1830s on Hancock Street (he would later become Emerson's neighbor in Concord). And noted historians William Hickling Prescott (his works focused on the Spanish Empire) lived on Beacon Street, while Francis Parkman (among his works was the seven-volume *France and England in North America*) lived on Chestnut Street.[22] Another "man of letters" of nineteenth century Boston was Henry Brook Adams, grandson and great-

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[21] For those who like cemeteries, Sleepy Hollow in Concord is the final resting place of many of the transcendentalists and literary figures of the era, including Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Louisa May Alcott, and Daniel Chester French (Lincoln Memorial sculptor). Concord grape developer Ephraim Wales Bull's tombstone reflects his bitterness at having had to sell his vines: "He sowed, others reaped."

[22] Parkman's account of his travels to the American West in the 1840s in *The Oregon Trail* was widely successful and helped spark the American migration west.

grandson of two American presidents, who lived on Marlborough Street in the Back Bay. Late in life, in 1907, Adams reflected on his life in *The Education of Henry Adams*, considered a classic of twentieth century non-fiction literature. Adams won the Pulitzer Prize posthumously for the work in 1919.

Boston's literary luminaries could often be found at the Boston Athenaeum, named after the Greek goddess of wisdom, founded in 1807, located since 1849 around the corner on Beacon Street, and home to an impressive private book, as well as art and artifact, collection, still available today for research. The largest private library in the country at the time, however, belonged to literary scholar George Ticknor, in his Bulfinch-designed house just up the street from the Athenaeum, at the corner of Beacon and Park Streets (known today as the Amory-Ticknor House). He regularly hosted the literary lights of the neighborhood in his parlor.[23] In 1836, John Lowell, Jr. endowed an educational foundation, the Lowell Institute, to host free public lectures in Boston, which have continued to the present.

While private libraries around the city swelled, demand grew for a free public library. In 1847, Boston's Common Council appointed a special committee to investigate the establishment of such a public library. Spurred by a $5,000 gift from former mayor Josiah Quincy Jr., in 1848, the city established the first large municipal library in the country. The Boston Public Library originally shared space with the Massachusetts Historical Society (which itself was founded in 1791 as the first historical preservation society in the country) in the Tontine Crescent off Franklin Street, and later moved to Boylston Street, before relocating again to its permanent home in Copley Square.

Boston's thirst for knowledge during this time is also reflected in the popularity of evening lectures and classes around town, and especially in its consumption of newspapers and periodicals. There were 28 different ones published in Boston in 1826; by 1848, that number had swelled to 120. The great *Atlantic Monthly* magazine would first be published in Boston in 1857. Its original editor was James Russell Lowell, while poet and essayist John Greenleaf Whittier was a contributing founder (he was also an ardent abolitionist and wrote a collection of anti-slavery poems called *Voices of Freedom*). From the beginning, the magazine billed itself as a "journal of literature, politics, science, and the arts." *Boston* magazine, still covering all things Boston, dates all the way back to 1805. The greatest of all medical journals, the *New England Journal of Medicine* started in 1812 in Boston when it was founded by physicians John Collins Warren and James Jackson. Warren was the son of one of

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[23] Ticknor taught foreign languages and literature at Harvard for many years (he was succeeded by the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow) and his 1849 three-volume *History of Spanish Literature* was considered a masterpiece.

the founders of Harvard Medical School (who we just learned about) and nephew of Revolutionary War hero Dr. Joseph Warren, but is best known for his first public demonstration of the use of ether as an anesthetic. In 1846, at Massachusetts General Hospital, dentist William Morton used a glass inhaler containing an ether-soaked sponge to put under Gilbert Abbott, allowing Dr. Warren to painlessly remove a tumor from Abbott's jaw.[24] Less well known about Dr. Warren, he would have his medical students engage in the practice of body snatching (digging up the recently deceased) so that they would have cadavers on which to study human anatomy. It was a grisly undertaking, so to speak, but it undoubtedly advanced knowledge of the human body.[25] At any rate, 30 years after MGH pioneered the use of anesthesia in surgery, it became the first hospital in America to follow the work of Scottish doctor Joseph Lister by adopting the use of antiseptics to prevent infections in surgery.

The arts were also emerging from the long shadow of Puritanism. The ban on public theaters in Massachusetts was not lifted until 1793, the same year Charles Bulfinch designed Boston's first one, as we learned, called the Boston Theatre (later called the Federal Street Theatre), located on Federal Street at Franklin Street (it was later relocated to Washington Street). Boston did not get a second theater until 1827 with the opening of the Tremont Theatre on Tremont Street, which later became the Tremont Temple after it was purchased by the Baptists. The Boston Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts must have been something to see in its day. It opened in 1841 on Tremont Street, primarily as a theater. But it also featured an art museum (hence the name), a natural history museum, wax figures, and a zoo. At the other end of Tremont Row, in Scollay Square, the Howard Athenaeum opened in 1845, and would stage Shakespeare and other great works of theater, performed by the great actors of the day, including Edwin Booth and his younger brother John

[24] Once the use of ether proved successful, William Morton's claim as the originator of the technique was quickly challenged and several lawsuits ensued. The medical community did not universally embrace the practice. A newspaper in Philadelphia, reporting on the surgery, remarked, "If it came from Boston, it must be humbug" (according to the book *Boston Made* by Robert Krim and Alan Earls). Boston, however, had no problem celebrating Morton's breakthrough by erecting in 1868 in the Public Garden a monument to the accomplishment.

[25] Dr. Warren long collected artifacts and anatomical specimens from his career and in 1847, he donated his extensive collection to Harvard University, including Morton's ether inhaler. The Warren Anatomical Museum is housed today at Harvard Medical School's Countway Library of Medicine. The museum's star attractions, donated after Warren's death, are the skull of Phineas Gage and the tamping iron that made him famous. In 1848, Gage was working as the foreman of a crew laying a railroad bed in Vermont. While using a tamping iron to pack in explosive powder into a hole, a spark rocketed the 43-inch, 13.25-pound iron straight up through Gage's cheek, brain, and skull, finally landing several dozen feet away. Incredibly, Gage appeared only staggered, telling the doctor who came to see him that, "Here is business enough for you." Gage would live another 12 years, but the accident changed his personality (he seemingly lost the ability to control impulses), suggesting a link between different parts of the brain and different behaviors, and making Gage history's most famous neuroscience patient.

Wilkes Booth (famous, obviously, for other reasons) for several decades (except for 1846 when a fire required that it be rebuilt) before becoming known as the Old Howard and its fare changed to decidedly more low-brow performances, as we will get to. In 1885, B.F. Keith and Edward Albee (the grandfather, by adoption, of the noted twentieth-century playwright of the same name) became the first vaudeville impresarios in the country through the shows they put on in Albee's Bijou Theatre (the first theater in the United States with electrical lights) and, a few years later, next door in the B.F. Keith's Theatre (surviving today as the Boston Opera House).

One of Boston's earliest theatrical stars was Susan Haswell Rowson, who relocated to Boston from England after the Revolution. She and her husband William Rowson both acted at the Federal Street Theatre. She also wrote a best-selling novel, *Charlotte Temple, A Tale of Truth*, and later founded the Young Ladies Academy in 1797. Another popular actress of the time was Elizabeth Arnold Poe, better known as the mother of macabre writer Edgar Allan Poe (whose Boston birth is commemorated with a statue at the corner of Charles and Boylston Streets, although Poe notoriously never liked Boston). One of the biggest Boston theater stars in the mid-nineteenth century was Charlotte Cushman, known for playing both male and female roles. She achieved initial fame in 1839 playing Romeo across from her sister Susan, who played Juliet. After several romantic relationships with women artists in Boston, Cushman moved to the socially more accepting Rome, Italy, where she established a salon for American women sculptors, including Massachusetts-natives Harriet Hosmer, Edmonia Lewis, and Anne Whitney. Lewis was of African American and Chippewa ancestry. Her sculptures are in the collections of museums around the world, including her bust of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in the collection of the Harvard Art Museums.

The Handel and Haydn Society dates to 1815 and is today the country's longest operating arts organization. Originally a choral society, it gave the American premiers of George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* (1818), and Joseph Haydn's *Creation* (1819).

Nowhere, however, was Boston's intellectual innovation more profound in the nineteenth century than in race relations and women's rights. The arc of Boston's history on race relations, from its repeated wars with the native population, its involvement in the colonial triangular slave trade, through busing in the 1970s and the challenges of inequality today, is something of a sorry one, but Boston can be justly proud of its leading role nationally in both the abolition and women's-rights movements in the period before the Civil War. But the actual story is more complex and more interesting than the traditional narrative that focuses on leading white men, such as journalist William Lloyd Garrison, attorney Wendell Phillips, clergyman Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and

politician Charles Sumner, not to minimize their significant roles in this important story. As the great Frederick Douglass said in a speech in 1863 about Massachusetts: "She was the first in the War of Independence; first to break the chains of her slaves; first to make the black man equal before the law; first to admit colored children to her common schools, and she was first to answer with her blood the alarm cry of the nation, when its Capital was menaced by rebels."

Massachusetts was indeed the first state to effectively abolish slavery, doing so in 1783, just three years after the adoption of the Massachusetts Constitution. The issue of slavery had largely been unquestioned in Massachusetts in colonial times, although, as we've learned, in 1700 judge Samuel Sewall, of the Salem Witch Trial fame, wrote a pamphlet called the *Selling of Joseph* that was highly critical of the institution of slavery, describing the kidnappings as "atrocious" crimes. With the rise of the revolutionary movement starting in the 1760s, some Boston radicals acknowledged parallels between the struggle for liberty from Great Britain, and the deprivation of liberty of Blacks in America. James Otis wrote in 1764 that Americans are born free whether "white or black." By 1766, the Boston Town Meeting began debating the abolition question, and in 1767, the Massachusetts House of Representatives considered bills to abolish slavery and the slave trade, although these did not pass. Harvard College held debates on the question as well.

As protests mounted in Boston against British tyranny, Boston's Black residents participated, with Crispus Attucks becoming a martyr at the Boston Massacre. Phillis Wheatley's poems helped narrate the Revolutionary movement in Boston.[26] Certainly, the irony of radical Boston permitting slavery was not lost on the free and slave Black communities in the town. A local abolition movement emerged, using pamphleting and petitioning as means for getting the message out. An abolition petition from the Black community was turned into a bill that was adopted by the General Court in January 1774, but Governor Hutchinson declined to support it, apparently on instructions from Great Britain. When war came in 1775, Boston's Black community joined the efforts. They

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[26] Wheatley got her first name in America from the name of the slave ship, the *Phillis*, that transported her from Africa to Griffin Wharf in 1761. She had been abducted from her home in western Africa when she was about seven years old. Once in Boston, she was purchased by Thomas Wheatley as a personal servant for his wife Susanna. Susanna recognized the young girl's intellect and taught her to read and write. The girl soon started writing poetry. Susanna tried to get it published in Boston without success. In 1773, the Wheatleys traveled to England with Phillis to try to get her works published there. The result was *Poems of Phillis Wheatley: A Native African and Slave*. The Wheatleys decided to manumit Phillis (grant her freedom) before they returned to Boston. Thomas and Susanna each died shortly after their return, but Phillis soon saw the opportunity for further poetry in which she drew parallels between the Revolutionary movement and the lack of freedom enjoyed by the Black residents of Massachusetts (and elsewhere). Wheatley married John Peters, an educated freeman, in 1778 and they lived on Queen Street (today's Court Street near the Old State House). She had three children, but they all died in infancy. Phillis herself passed away around age 30 in 1784.

were there at Lexington and Concord, Bunker Hill, and the Siege of Boston. In total, as many as 1,500 Black troops from Massachusetts served in the Revolutionary War.

In 1780, a group of men of African descent, led by Paul Cuffe of Westport, attempted to point out the hypocrisy as to how Massachusetts, the home of "no taxation without representation," treated its Black residents, by filing a petition with the General Court to exempt them from business taxes unless they were granted the franchise. Their petition was denied, although Black men would be granted the right to vote three years later in 1783.[27] When the Massachusetts Constitution was adopted in 1780, it provided that "all men are born free and equal." Constitutions, however, are not self-executing and the provision did not suddenly dissolve the institution of slavery in Massachusetts. In 1781, Mum Bett, whose arm bore a scar from a blow from a red-hot kitchen shovel wielded by her master's wife, overheard friends of her master discussing the new Massachusetts Constitution and its recognition that all people were born free and equal. She sought the advice of young Stockbridge abolitionist lawyer Theodore Sedgwick. He agreed to file suit on her behalf seeking damages for her burn in the Court of Common Pleas, and added a male slave he knew who went by the name of Brom as a plaintiff. In the case of *Brom and Bett v. Ashley*, a jury returned a verdict for the plaintiffs, assessing damages of 30 shillings for each of Brom and Bett, and court costs of nearly six pounds. Ashley at first sought review with the Supreme Judicial Court, but later withdrew his appeal and accepted the jury verdict.[28] While the jury's decision was notable, it set no precedent in the Commonwealth. For that, it took a criminal case against a former slave owner from the town of Barre, Massachusetts named Nathaniel Jennison.

One of Jennison's slaves, named Quock Walker, had escaped to the home of the two sons of Walker's former owner, James Caldwell. Jennison found Walker there and beat him, taking him back to captivity. Walker decided to fight back. Represented by Worcester County lawyers Levi Lincoln and Caleb Strong, Walker brought a civil suit against Jennison for assault and battery, winning a jury award of 50 pounds. Jennison then turned around and sued the Caldwell brothers for interfering with his property, winning a jury award of 25 pounds, which was later overturned by the Supreme

[27] Cuffe went on to become a successful merchant, owning ten ships, and using his wealth to support a variety of African-American interests and causes.

[28] As for Bett, now freed, she would change her name to Elizabeth Freeman, work as a housekeeper for the Sedgwicks, and save enough money to buy some land and see the growth of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. One night, during Shays' Rebellion of 1786-87, a mob approached the Sedgwick house with apparent violent intent. The Sedgwicks were out, but Freeman stood her ground and protected the house from damage. Freeman died in 1829 and was buried in the Sedgwick family plot (called the Sedgwick Pie) in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. There is also a watercolor portrait of Freeman in collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society done by a member of the Sedgwick family. Actress Kyra Sedgwick is a descendant of Theodore Sedgwick.

Judicial Court on appeal. In a third case arising out of the same incident (collectively known as the *Quock Walker Cases*), the Attorney General brought a criminal assault and battery case against Jennison. In April 1783, that case came before the Supreme Judicial Court sitting as a trial court. In his charge to the jury, Chief Justice William Cushing (who later became one of the original five United States Supreme Court justices) declared that Jennison did not enjoy property rights in Walker. He explained: "[T]he people of this commonwealth have solemnly bound themselves to each other – to declare – that all men are born free and equal; and that every subject is entitled to liberty, and to have it guarded by the laws as well as his life and property. In short, without resorting to implication in constructing the constitution, slavery is in my judgment as effectively abolished as it can be by the granting of rights and privileges wholly incompatible and repugnant to its existence." Jennison was convicted. While the language in the jury charge was not widely publicized at the time, the case helped establish the understanding at the time that the courts in Massachusetts would not enforce any claim of property rights in another human being. By 1790, the census recorded no slaves in Massachusetts.

Nevertheless, early nineteenth-century Boston looked much like the Jim Crow South a century later. Basic civil rights were withheld from Boston's small but not insignificant Black population, in a system too often upheld with violence. And while the voices of the abolitionists who we will meet were no doubt loud, they were probably never a majority, with trade with the South, competition for jobs, and basic racism all contributing to the indifference or outright hostility by many in Boston to the abolition movement. As a result, the abolition struggle in Boston was as much the story of a grass roots Black movement as it was a story of leading white men. And the struggle was as much about civil rights at home as it was about the right to keep slaves in the southern states. The triumph of the movement, then, and what made Boston a true trailblazer nationally, was in how Boston's small Black population, through organization, boycotts, advocacy, petitioning, and protests, forced the legalization of interracial marriage, the right to join the bar and to employment by the government, and the integration of theaters, railcars, and public schools, more than 100 years before *Brown v. Board of Education*. It is a great story not often told in this city.

Boston's Black population in the early nineteenth century was mostly concentrated around the north-slope of Beacon Hill and in the West End. Most of that community was clustered along

four streets: Southac (now Phillips), Belknap (now Joy[29]), May (now Revere), and West Cedar. The community faced intense discrimination and hostility from the white population all around them. The housing segregation that kept Boston Black population so highly concentrated on a few streets was enforced by the threat of violence. But segregation was not limited to housing. Blacks were forced to sit in separate sections on railcars and in theaters. While Blacks were allowed to attend white churches, they generally were forced to sit in the balcony and did not enjoy full privileges. Even the usually-inclusive Masons were segregated, with Prince Hall, one of the leaders of the Boston Black community at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, founding African Lodge No. 1, with Hall as the Grand Master. Employment opportunities were also extremely limited for Boston's small Black population in the early nineteenth century, with custom preventing white merchants and craftsmen from hiring Black apprentices. Most found employment as domestic servants or laborers. There were periodic race riots.

In response, the Black community started creating its own institutions. Most important of these was the African Baptist Church on Belknap Street on Beacon Hill. The church was constructed in the Federal style almost entirely by Black labor in 1806, although the capital – final construction cost was $7,700 – was raised from both white and Black communities, with Cato Gardner acting as the lead fundraiser. The congregation's first minister was the Reverend Thomas Paul (who started before the church building was completed, holding worship services at Faneuil Hall), who held that position for two-and-a-half decades. Later known as the African Meeting House, the new church played a central role in the Black experience in Boston in the nineteenth century, supporting the abolitionist movement, hosting speeches from notables such as Frederick Douglass, Lucy Stone, Harriet Tubman, and Maria Stewart (who is known as the first American woman to give a public speech to a mixed crowd of men and women, white and Black, and as the first African-American woman to lecture about women's rights), and serving as a recruitment base for the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts regiment during the Civil War. It is also reported to have been a stop on the Underground Railroad, although where the escaped enslaved persons hid in the building is not known.[30]

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[29] So associated was Belknap Street with Boston's Black community, that Yankees living on the upper part of the street later petitioned the city to change their part of Belknap to Joy, a name that later was extended to the whole street as the number of Blacks on that section of Beacon Hill eventually declined.

[30] The African Meeting House, with the adjacent Abiel Smith School building, today is open to the public, holds a museum of African American history, is a stop on the Black Heritage Trail, and is a National Historic Landmark. It is the oldest African-American church building still in existence in the United States today.

But the African Meeting House was hardly alone as an institution of support for the Black community in the early nineteenth century. Other early Black churches included the African Methodist Episcopal Church founded in 1818, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church founded in 1838. Both Howard's Barbershop and John J. Smith's Barbershop on Cambridge Street, on the north side of Beacon Hill, served as a community gathering places, where jobs were listed, and tickets to local events were sold. Women's community groups often met at William Johnson's grocery store on what is now Phillips Street. Members of the community also formed organizations such as the General Colored Association of Massachusetts, founded in 1826; a temperance society formed in the 1830s, and a chapter of the fraternal organization of the Odd Fellows, in 1846.

Certain members of the Black community also took on prominent roles in advocating against the mistreatment of the community both in Boston and across the country. David Walker's *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World,* published in 1829, just one year before he would die of tuberculosis, advocated for natural rights and economic self-determination. The book included a critique of Boston's own segregated schools. It was widely disseminated, including secretly throughout the slave-holding South, so outraging slave owners that they put a bounty on Walker's head. Similarly, Maria Stewart argued that Boston's Black community should focus more on discrimination at home rather than focus solely on the scourge of southern slavery.

Condemnation of slavery was indeed becoming more widespread in early nineteenth-century Boston. But while the American slave trade ended in 1808 following the passage by Congress of the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves, Massachusetts merchants continued to benefit from the institution of slavery in the American South, particularly the textile merchants, discussed below, who used raw cotton from the South in their mills. As a result, those in Boston who spoke out against slavery tended to do so cautiously, with a go-slow approach.[31]

That began to change in the 1830s. In 1831, William Lloyd Garrison started publication of *The Liberator*, whose articles argued that slavery was a moral evil, and advocated for the immediate end of slavery, without compensation.[32] Garrison made clear from the first issue where he stood on the question of slavery: "I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do

[31] As Boston's abolition movement became increasingly radicalized in the 1840s and especially in the 1850s, as we'll see, angry Southern planters threatened to cease doing business with Boston financiers, mills, and merchants unless they put an end to the threats to the institution of slavery.
[32] The paper was initially published on Congress Street (in a building destroyed in the Great Fire of 1872) before moving to Cornhill in 1834.

not wish to think, or to speak, or write, with moderation…. I am in earnest – I will not equivocate – I will not excuse – I will not retreat a single inch – AND I WILL BE HEARD."

In 1832, Garrison and his fellow white abolitionist attorney Ellis Gray Loring founded the New England Anti-Slavery Society. The anti-abolition movement, however, retained strength in Boston in the 1830s, as evidenced by several bloody confrontations initiated by those opposed to the abolitionist movement, the most serious of which occurred in 1835, when a mob seized Garrison, beat and dragged him toward Boston Common on the threat of a lynching, although constables, and the mayor, Theodore Lyman II, himself broke up the mob and saved Garrison (but then arrested *Garrison* as a "rioter").

Garrison was not deterred. He knew that to ensure his paper's success, he needed to make it part of the fabric of Boston's Black community.[33] He hired members of the community to work at the paper, including the Reverend Thomas Paul's son, Thomas Jr., and William Cooper Nell, who would work closely with Garrison for many years. They welcomed articles from the Black community and, in addition to its abolitionist advocacy, the weekly newspaper served as one of general interest to the Black community, publishing job postings, event listings, obituaries, and warnings when slavecatchers were spotted in the city. Three-quarters of *The Liberator's* 400 regular subscribers were Black.

For Garrison's colleague Nell, "prejudice is the cause of slavery." He argued that the fight against discrimination in Boston was part of the fight against slavery. He noted that white children did not display prejudices; that the hostility of adults was a learned behavior. Nell was speaking from personal experience. In 1829, while a student at the African School, he was chosen as one of three recipients of the Franklin Medal, awarded annually to Boston's most outstanding students. But while eligible for the award, he was not invited to the awards banquet. Rosalyn Delores Elder, founder of the African American Heritage in Massachusetts wrote in her comprehensive history, *Exploring the Legacy*: "Determined to be present at the event where he was to be honored, Nell disguised himself as a waiter. The irony and injustice of the occasion sparked a life of activism against educational

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[33] "Garrisonian" abolitionists based in Boston (sometimes referred to as the "Boston clique") would have a falling out with the national abolition movement in the 1840s over policy. Garrisonians attacked churches as being complicit in Southern slavery, believed the political system was corrupt for protecting slavery, and argued that women's equality was part of the movement. Women were active in the abolition movement out of Boston. Lydia Marie Child would become a leading abolitionist writer. Women also played a major role as fundraisers; Boston's annual Christmas fair, which became known as the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar at Faneuil Hall, organized by female abolitionists, became a major source of funds, over $5,000 per year, for the movement. The more conservative national movement was often based in local churches, advocated for slower political change, generally did not include women in their movement, and feared that radical abolitionism scared away potential allies.

inequality and for civil rights that lasted throughout his life."[34] Similarly, other activists such as James McCune Smith observed that a limitation of the abolitionist movement was the failure to advocate for the social equality of Blacks. African American clergy were adding their voices as well. The Reverend Hosea Easton of the West Center Street Church, a Methodist church on what is today Anderson Street on Beacon Hill, in the late 1830s spoke out against American clergy complicit in the institution of slavery.

Thus, by the start of the 1840s, Boston's Black community was ready to take on discrimination at home. Members of the community focused on segregation in transportation, public forums, employment, and places of worship. Their means of protest are familiar: petitions, written and oral advocacy, boycotts, mass protests, lawsuits, and sit-ins. Blacks started buying tickets to the theatre, or sitting in the "white" section of trains. They were often met by disapproving authorities and sometimes by violence. In one notable incident, African-American Sarah Parker Remond attended a show at the Howard Athenaeum with several friends. When management asked the group to give up their seats and move to the section reserved for Blacks in the upper balcony, they refused, and then were forcibly removed from the theater and thrown down the stairs and out the door. Remond sued for injuries to her shoulder and the price of her ticket, winning a $500 judgment against the theater. Other Blacks organized boycotts of the railroads. In 1840, leading Black abolitionist David Ruggles sued a rail company after being violently thrown off a train in New Bedford, but the judge ruled that private corporations had the right to exclude "undesirables," including Blacks. In 1843 came a major breakthrough: The Eastern Railroad announced that it was ending segregation on its trains.

Places and types of employment started opening up. Robert Morris had begun his career working for the abolitionist lawyer Ellis Gray Loring as a household servant, but he continually impressed Loring, who gave Morris increasing responsibilities and, in 1847, presented him for admission to the Massachusetts Bar. Morris became only the second Black lawyer in Massachusetts (after Macon Bolling Allen, who was admitted to the Bar in 1845 and shortly after became a Justice of the Peace in Middlesex County, the first African American to hold a judicial position in the country) and one of only a small handful in the whole country, out of close to 24,000 lawyers at the

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[34] In 1860, Nell was appointed a postal clerk in Boston, becoming the first known African-American civilian employee of the federal government, an incredible 72 years after the United States Constitution was ratified. Nell was a man of varied talents. He was a pioneering historian of Black history, particularly on the role played by African Americans in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. He also was an accomplished playwright, his works put on by the Histrionic Club, formed in the 1840s as Boston's first Black drama group.

time.[35] Practicing in Boston, Morris is noted as the first Black lawyer to both file and win lawsuits in the United States. John Rock apprenticed under Morris after Rock had to give up a medical career due to health issues. He was admitted to the Bar of Massachusetts in 1861 and, in 1865, on a motion by Charles Sumner, Rock became the first African-American lawyer admitted to the Bar of the United States Supreme Court.

In 1854, Massachusetts got its first Black physician, when John V. De Grasse was admitted to the Massachusetts Medical Association. Years later, in 1864, Rebecca Lee Crumpler became the first Black female doctor in the country after graduating from the New England Female Medical College (which later became part of Boston University School of Medicine). At the end of the Civil War, she traveled to Virginia to care for newly freed slaves who did not have access to medical care. Crumpler returned to Boston in 1869, practicing first on Joy Street in Beacon Hill, before moving her practice to Hyde Park where she provided care to that (then independent) town's small Black community until her death in 1895.

The Black community of Boston also began a sustained lobbying effort against the Massachusetts law (dating to 1705) prohibiting interracial marriage. In 1843, the General Court repealed the ban in a close vote. It was a stunning victory at the time, 124 years before laws against interracial marriage were declared unconstitutional in the United States.

Ending segregation in Boston's schools was next. It would be a long and ultimately triumphant struggle and would feature one of the most important, although not well remembered today, lawsuits in the history of American jurisprudence. The case was *Roberts v. City of Boston*. Its story is my favorite in the whole history of the city.

Although Boston's schools were segregated in the 1840s, they had not always been so. In colonial Boston, the town's small free Black community sent its children to integrated schools, but there, the children endured bullying and harassment. As a result, Black leaders in 1787, four years after slavery was abolished in Massachusetts, petitioned initially without success for the Boston School Committee to create a separate, segregated, school for Black children. They tried again in 1798. The School Committee refused to allocate funds for a separate Black school but invited the Black community to found its own separate school. Thus, the first separate school for Black children in Boston started in the house of Primus Hall (son of Revolutionary War veteran Prince Hall) in 1798, and later was held in a carpenter's shop. It is not clear that after 1798, there was ever a formal

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[35] In a later milestone, Blacks in Massachusetts would secure the right to sit on juries in 1860. The first African-American judge appointed in the Commonwealth was George Lewis Ruffin in 1883.

adoption of a segregation policy. Instead, admission to Boston schools at the time required a ticket of admission from a member of each school district's committee (by the time the *Roberts* case was first brought in 1847, Boston was divided into 21 school districts, with a total of 161 schools across the city), with a right of appeal first to the full district committee, and then to the general city-wide committee. It appears that after a separate school was set up for Black children, the district committee members simply stopped granting admission tickets for Black children to go anywhere else, and those localized decisions were backed by the full School Committee.

When the African Meeting House was completed in 1806, the school moved to the basement. The school was operated essentially as a private school, with parents paying a small tuition, and the balance of operating expenses covered by community donations. In 1815, wealthy white merchant Abiel Smith created an endowment for the school. With a source of revenue to support the school, the School Committee finally asserted control over what was still called the African School.

The School Committee's first action was to fire the black teacher. In a pattern that would repeat itself 100 years later in Boston, the School Committee largely ignored the African School, still housed in the basement of the African Meeting House. The school suffered from inadequate teacher staffing and compensation, and neglected maintenance and repair. It was a source of frustration for the community on the North Slope of Beacon Hill, then considered part of West Boston, later the West End. At some point after 1820, a second Black school was opened on Sun Court Street. As things deteriorated for the two schools in the 1830s, enlightened School Committee member David Child produced a report condemning the level of education for Black children in Boston, and then helped secure additional School Committee funding which, combined with money from the Smith endowment, was then used to construct a new school next to the African Meeting House in 1835. It would be named for Abiel Smith.[36]

As a question of resources, the Abiel Smith School, along with, presumably, the school on Sun Court Street, in the late 1830s and 1840s was neglected compared to the white schools of Boston. The Abiel Smith School was the only school without a play yard or trees. Its curriculum was far more limited than that taught at the white schools. Textbooks were scarce; the library had but a single book. Its students were not eligible for city-wide achievement honors. Stephen and Paul

[36] The Black community also had a strong tradition of community education through oral histories. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Cyrus Foster, a Revolutionary War veteran, was known as a griot, who traveled around the community telling stories of the war and the community. In 1838, the community organized the Adelphic Union Library Association as a place for intellectual debates and other lectures.

Kendrick in their excellent *Sarah's Long Walk: The Free Blacks of Boston and How Their Struggle for Equality Changed America* examine evidence that the school's Black students were subjected to corporal punishment more readily than students had to endure at the white schools in the city. And yet, importantly for the *Roberts* case as we will get to, the teachers at the Abiel Smith were paid the same as teachers in the rest of the school system.

To draw attention to the problems at the Abiel Smith School, a group of parents organized a boycott. This prompted the General Court in 1845 to take up a bill to make it unlawful in the Commonwealth to exclude any student from a public school, which would have effectively ended, if adopted, school segregation in Massachusetts. But the bill faced intense opposition and the legislature ended up passing a compromise bill which provided compensation to any student excluded from "public school instruction." This was a tough standard for Black students to meet since there was a school open to them.

Without success at the state level, the advocates turned to the Boston School Committee to push for desegregation. The Committee asked for input from the City Solicitor, who opined that segregated schools were permitted in Boston if, in the School Committee's judgment, separate schools were in the best interests of the children; the School Committee then promptly found that segregated schools were – an opinion buttressed ironically by the fact that it had been the Black community itself who had lobbied in the first place for separate schools. In fact, he push for integration was not unanimous even within the Black community. Many families still felt, and certain Black educators at the Abiel Smith School argued, that Black students best learned with other Black students; sending Black students to white schools would only subject them to scorn and harassment.

Benjamin Roberts had grown up in segregated schools and, as an adult, he recalled the humiliation he felt at being prohibited from going to school with his white childhood friends. To get his four-year old daughter Sarah from their home on the waterfront in the North End to the Abiel Smith School, Roberts had to walk Sarah past five different white schools. Roberts therefore applied for admission to the closer Otis School and Sarah was accepted. But when the School Committee learned that Sarah was attending a white school, they sent a police officer to escort her from the school. Roberts decided to file suit against the policy. He hired Robert Morris, Boston's only Black lawyer. The year was 1847.[37]

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[37] The movement to integrate the schools of a different Massachusetts community would launch the public career of perhaps the most famous of all advocates on the cause of Black Americans in the nineteenth century. In 1841, a 23-year-old escaped slave from Maryland named Frederick Douglass traveled to Nantucket and joined a protest against the refusal of the Nantucket school committee to admit Black student Eunice Ross to Nantucket High School. So

The case would be a challenge. The Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under law, as well as its guarantee of due process, would not be ratified for 21 more years, after the Civil War. The Massachusetts Declaration of Rights guaranteed only that "All men are born free and equal." Morris decided to rely on the 1845 state statute that provided compensation to any student excluded from a public-school education. But Sarah had been granted admission to the Abiel Smith School, so Morris had a tough argument to make. Sentiments in the broader white community were also not on Sarah's side. There were warnings that should Roberts win the case, white students would leave the Boston schools. Roberts lost at trial.

Morris then approached the young abolitionist lawyer Charles Sumner to help with the appeal to the Supreme Judicial Court. Morris would recite the facts for the Court and then Sumner would make the legal argument. It is believed that Morris and Sumner were the first interracial pair of lawyers to co-sign a brief and to argue together in court. It was 1849. Sumner's argument in the old courthouse on Court Street would be one of the greatest in the history of Massachusetts courtroom advocacy. While Sumner gets full credit for the forcefulness of his words, the Kendricks note that many of Sumner's arguments were derived from black petitions and articles over the previous 20 years of civil rights struggles.

Sumner began: "Can any discrimination on account of race or color be made among children entitled to the benefit of our Common Schools under the Constitution and Laws of Massachusetts?" Sumner then got right to the issue of equality before the law. "Of equality I shall speak, not only as a sentiment, but as a principle embodied in the Constitution of Massachusetts and obligatory upon court and citizen." Sumner argued that there was no Massachusetts law requiring segregation, and indeed the spirit of the Massachusetts Constitution, apart from its words, demanded that all men, without regard to race, be treated equally before the law. He argued, "He is not poor, or weak, or humble, or black—nor Caucasian, nor Jew, nor Indian, nor Ethiopian—nor French, nor German, nor English, nor Irish; he is a Man—the equal of all his fellow-men." Sumner then walked the Supreme Judicial Court through English history, French philosophy, and Christian theology to establish that equality is foundational to our whole system of laws.

The School Committee, Sumner argued, had no authority to exclude children from certain schools on the basis of race. By statute, admission tickets are to be conferred on qualified student applicants. Sumner argued that age, sex, and moral and intellectual fitness were appropriate

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stirring was the speech given by Douglass that the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society hired him on the spot as one of its touring speakers. Douglass would end up visiting the island many times during his long career as an orator.

qualifications on which to judge a child, but skin color cannot be considered a qualification or disqualification. Further, in making such judgments of qualifications, Sumner argued any such discretion must be exercised reasonably, anticipating by nearly a century the development of a substantive due process interpretation of the not-yet-even-conceived 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

But Sumner finally had to get to the crux of his challenge, overcoming the limitations of the statute under which the lawsuit had been brought, which prohibited only the denial of a public education and did not, facially at least, guarantee equality of education. And even if such a requirement could be read into the statute, the teachers at the Black schools were paid the same as the teachers at the schools in the rest of the city's school districts, and the Black administrators worked hard to make the Black schools places of learning.

Sumner took the challenge straight on in the most famous part of his argument. Segregated schools, even if ostensibly of equal quality, denied its students, Black or white, of a full education. "The school is the little world where the child is trained for the larger world of life…. And since, according to our institutions, all classes, without distinction of color, meet in the performance of civil duties, so should they all, without distinction of color, meet in the school – beginning there those relations of Equality which Constitution and Laws promise to all." One can almost hear Sumner's oratory soaring at this point in the old courthouse: "Society and intercourse are means established by Providence for human improvement.[38] They remove antipathies, promote mutual adaptation and conciliation, and establish relations of reciprocal regard."

Segregation, Sumner continued, isolated and stigmatized an entire community. Without diversity, the entire school system suffers. "The whites themselves are injured by the separation. Who can doubt this?" Prejudice is the product of ignorance, Sumner continued. All classes and races must meet in the "performance of our civic duties." The "virtues and sympathies" necessary to these ends must be learned in school without "distinction of color." And then a final flourish: "[A vestige of slavery such as school segregation] is a monster which must be hunted down by the public and the constituted authorities."

It was an amazing argument. It did not carry the day. The Supreme Judicial Court's decision was concise. It was written by Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, a titan of the nineteenth-century state bench. The Court actually acknowledged the concept of equality before the law but rejected as too

[38] And just like that, Sumner unintentionally also articulates the fundamental argument in favor of urbanism.

simple Sumner's argument that therefore all must be treated the same by the law. First, the Court focused on the fact that despite Boston being divided up into school districts, assignments were not geographical, but were based on parents seeking admission tickets essentially to the school of their choice. Thus, the Court reasoned, Roberts's claim to being injured by having to pass five white schools before reaching the Abiel Smith School was of no consequence. This was a remarkably ironic basis on which to justify segregation in light of what we know from the school busing fight to end *de facto* segregation of Boston's schools in the 1970s, as we will get to.

The Supreme Judicial Court continued its analysis. Chief Justice Shaw wrote, "But, when this great principle [of equality] comes to be applied to the actual and various conditions of persons in society, it will not warrant the assertion that men and women are legally clothed with the same civil and political powers, and that children and adults are legally to have the same functions and be subject to the same treatment; but only that the rights of all, as they are settled and regulated by law, are equally entitled to the paternal consideration and protection of the law for their maintenance and security." It was perfectly acceptable, then, for the Boston School Committee to maintain different schools for children of different ages, different gender, and different achievement levels. The Court concluded: "It is urged, that this maintenance of separate schools tends to deepen and perpetuate the odious distinction of caste, founded in a deep-rooted prejudice in public opinion. This prejudice, if it exists, is not created by law, and probably cannot be changed by law."

The cause of equality had lost the day. But the sad effect of the decision would be even longer living. This brings us to the 1896 United States Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. That case had involved a legal challenge to Louisiana's Separate Car Act, under which Homer Plessy had been arrested for refusing to vacate the "whites only" car of a Louisiana train. Plessy argued that the separate rail cars violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. The Supreme Court did not agree.[39] "The object of the amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of

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[39] In an historical coincidence, both Plessy's lawyer, Albion Winegar Tourgee, and the author of the Supreme Court's majority decision, Justice Henry Billings Brown, were born in Lee, Massachusetts. Brown was joined in his opinion by Justice Stephen J. Field, who grew up in Berkshire County and attended Williams College in Williamstown. It was a bitter irony that Massachusetts, the intellectual home of the abolition movement, had produced two of the justices behind the decision that upheld segregation.
There have been a remarkable number of United States Supreme Court justices from Boston and Massachusetts. We have learned about some of them, including William Cushing (original member of the Court) and Joseph Story (long-time justice best known for the *Amistad* case). There have been many others. Benjamin Curtis notably was one of the two dissenters in *Dred Scott* case, in which the majority ruled that the rights and privileges of the Constitution did not extend to Blacks. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. and Louis D. Brandeis were titans of the Court in the early-twentieth century and champions of free speech. Brandeis was the first Jewish justice on the Supreme Court. Felix Frankfurter, also from Massachusetts, would be the third. (Before joining the Court, Frankfurter was a legendary

the two races before the law, but, in the nature of things, it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political, equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either." The Court continued: "Laws permitting, and even requiring, their separation, in places where they are liable to be brought into contact, do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other, and have been generally, if not universally, recognized as within the competency of the state legislatures in the exercise of their police power." And now the Court brings us to *Sarah Roberts's* case. "The most common instance of this is connected with the establishment of separate schools for white and colored children, which have been held to be valid exercise of the legislative power even by the courts of states where the political rights of the colored race have been longest and most earnestly enforced. One of the earliest of these cases is that of *Roberts v. City of Boston*, 5 Cush. 198, in which the supreme judicial court of Massachusetts held that the general school committee of Boston had power to make provision for the instruction of colored children in separate schools established exclusively for them, and to prohibit their attendance upon the other schools." The United States Supreme Court then quoted from Chief Justice Shaw's decision at length. And just like that, Shaw's words provided the legal justification for what became known as the "separate but equal" doctrine, the foundation on which Jim Crow was based.

But I told you this was my favorite story, and it would not be that if we ended it there. First, while Benjamin Roberts (Sarah's father) lost the lawsuit, he won the battle. If he could not find justice in the courts, he would look for it from the legislature. Roberts started a state-wide petition drive to integrate the Commonwealth's public schools, although Boston was the only municipality in the state still segregating its schools. Roberts was joined in his efforts by William Cooper Nell leading a similar petition drive. They found a champion in the legislature in Charles Slack, a young abolitionist who had seen an opportunity to ride into office on the Know-Nothing Party's shocking legislative sweep in 1854 (about whom we will get to). Slack was appointed chair of the Joint Committee on Education. Inspired by the petition drives, he prepared a report in favor of school integration, writing about the positive experience of educators across the Commonwealth in

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Harvard Law School professor, co-founder of the ACLU, and adviser to President Franklin Roosevelt.) Horace Gray preceded Holmes on the Court and is notable as the first justice to hire a law clerk. He had previously been Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, where he was also the first justice to hire a law clerk – Brandeis. On the present Supreme Court, both justices Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan were appointed from Massachusetts (Breyer from his position as Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in Boston; Kagan from being Dean at Harvard Law School).

integrated schools, and the higher performances of Black children in integrated schools compared to those in segregated schools in the state. Slack's bill swept through the General Court and on April 28, 1855, Know-Nothing governor Henry Gardner signed the bill into law. Massachusetts public schools had been integrated as a matter of law. And for the rest of the nineteenth century, Boston's still-modest Black community enjoyed some degree of integration into Boston society, certainly as compared to other northern cities of the time. In 1860, Massachusetts became the first state with integrated juries. In 1875, Dr. James Still became the first African American to serve on the Boston School Committee. Dr. Samuel Courtney was the second, serving from 1897 to 1901.[40] There was at least one Black representative in the Massachusetts legislature every year from 1867 to the end of the century, and at least one Black City Councilor between 1876 and 1895. The push and pull between the Irish and the Yankees, however, would end this run. By the late 1890s, the Irish ward system made the Irish ascendant in city politics. Then, as we will get to, Yankee reform in the 1910s eliminated the ward system in favor of at-large elections meant to swing the balance of power back to the Yankees in city government. It did not work as the Yankees planned, but it also meant Boston's small Black community had no path to electoral success.

But we still have not reached the end of the story about Sarah Roberts's lawsuit. In the early 1950s, Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund were looking for cases to challenge before the United States Supreme Court the "separate but equal" doctrine from *Plessy,* as applied to public schools. Marshall found plenty of examples of dramatic disparities in educational opportunities across the segregated South. But overreliance on these examples carried a risk for Marshall and the NAACP. They were afraid that if they relied on plaintiffs from such dismal Black schools, they might unintentionally give the Supreme Court the path to a narrow ruling – that these particular schools were not in fact *equal* – but at the same time reaffirming the principle that equal facilities could be separate. In other words, if the facts of the cases being brought before the Supreme Court were too egregious, the Supreme Court could avoid ruling on the very thing Marshall and the NAACP wanted challenged – the holding from *Plessy* and the legal foundation to Jim Crow laws. For their lead plaintiff, to directly challenge the "separate but equal" principle, they needed a child from a segregated school system in which the Black and white schools were more

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[40] The first Black teacher in the Boston Schools was Harriet L. Smith, who taught from 1890 to 1917. Maria Louise Baldwin was a long-time teacher and then headmaster of the Agassiz School in Cambridge until her death in 1922. In honor of her contribution to the school, it was renamed the Maria L. Baldwin School in 2004.

closely equal. They found their ideal case in the segregated school system of Topeka, Kansas where if one looked at photos of the Black and white schools, it would not be obvious which were which.[41]

But by choosing a segregated school system with ostensibly equal Black and white schools, Marshall and the NAACP were essentially giving themselves the same challenge that Charles Sumner and Robert Morris faced a century earlier – how to argue that there was something fundamentally wrong with separation itself, apart from whether the two different facilities were otherwise "equal"? Marshall and the NAACP found their inspiration in the argument of Charles Sumner before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court issued its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Court recited the history of the "separate but equal" doctrine, writing that "[t]he doctrine apparently originated in *Roberts v. City of Boston* … upholding school segregation against attack as being violative of a state constitutional guarantee of equality." The Supreme Court then acknowledged the challenge of the Topeka case, writing "[i]n the Kansas case, the court below found substantial equality as to all such factors." That compelled the Court to confront the issue that Marshall and the NAACP wanted to force. The Court continued, "We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does." And then, echoing Sumner's argument from a century earlier: "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." It was a remarkable rebirth for an argument advanced so long ago in Boston, but demonstrates the power of ideas coming out of the city just at the time that Boston was reinventing itself in the 1840s.[42]

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[41] For those fascinated by the story of school desegregation in America, the Topeka schoolhouse building at the center of the case brought by Marshall and the NAACP is today run by the National Park Service, is open to the public, and has excellent exhibits on why it was chosen as the case to challenge the separate but equal doctrine. Further, Richard Kluger wrote a monumental account of the history of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in his book *Simple Justice*, which also recounts the *Roberts* case's central role in the saga.

[42] The fallacy of the concept of "separate but equal" also had a profound effect on Martin Luther King Jr. During the 1955-56 Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott that started with the arrest of Rosa Parks, Dr. King initially tried to negotiate with Montgomery white officials a resolution that would preserve segregated buses that would be more equal. Thus, there would still be separate sections on buses for Blacks and whites, but Blacks would no longer be required to give up their seats in the middle unreserved section to whites who wanted the seats, but even this minor step was immediately rejected. Dr. King observed, in words that echoed Sumner's, "Even when we asked for justice within the segregation laws, the 'powers that be' were not willing to grant it. Justice and equality, I saw, would never come while segregation remained because the basic purpose of segregation was to perpetuate injustice and inequality." Once Dr. King came to this realization, he changed the mindset of the boycott, explaining, "We are seeking to improve not the Negro of Montgomery but the whole of Montgomery." This was a key moment in the Civil Rights movement in the American South, when the goal changed from reforming the system to dismantling it, something William Monroe Trotter, who we will get to, had advocated from Boston a generation before.

Sumner's insight would resonate through Boston a half-century later in the battle for full equality of the state's LGBTQ citizens. The issue was the right of all citizens to marry. As we will get to, after the Supreme Judicial Court ruled in 2003 in *Goodridge v. Dept. of Public Health* that the Commonwealth's prohibition of gay marriage violated the Massachusetts Constitution, the General Court responded by considering the legalization of gay civil unions in lieu of the right to marry. The Supreme Judicial Court would accept nothing short of full equality, the Court writing, "the history of our nation has demonstrated that separate is seldom, if ever, equal."

Sumner was a rebel talent (by possessing those qualities as described by Francesca Gino in her book *Rebel Talent*), from a time when Boston was producing them in abundance. And more of them would come out of the abolition movement, which remarkably would influence events across the centuries. The start of the women's rights movement, and more specifically the women's suffrage movement in the United States, can be traced to the abolition movement in Massachusetts as far back as the 1830s, and the state would remain a center for the movement throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As noted above, William Lloyd Garrison had believed that women could play a critical role in the abolition movement and had early on involved them in his *Liberator* newspaper and encouraged the women of Boston and New England to become activists and advocates for the million Black women in slavery. In 1831 and 1832, the *Liberator* published several pamphlets by the free-Black woman Maria Stewart, who had been born in Hartford in 1803, but had come to Boston and been married in the African Meeting House in 1826. Stewart then, in 1832 and 1833, wrote and delivered around Boston a series of lectures, given to a mixed audience of men and women, both white and Black, on the topic of the rights of Black women and social justice. Garrison published the four lectures in the *Liberator*. The lectures were revolutionary, not so much for their content, but the fact that they were given by a woman, particularly an African-American woman. She is credited as the first African-American woman to give a public lecture and the first woman in the country to lecture to a mixed-audience. She rousingly declared in one of her speeches: "O, ye daughters of Africa, awake! Awake! Arise! No longer sleep nor slumber, but distinguish yourselves." There was a public backlash against a woman speaking in public and Stewart decided to leave Boston for New York and retire from public speaking.

Another milestone in the movement came in 1833 when Boston novelist Lydia Maria Child (best known as author of the popular Thanksgiving poem "Over the River and Through the Wood") published *An Appeal on Behalf of that Class of Americans Called Africans,* the first book in the United States calling for the immediate emancipation of the slaves without slaveholder compensation. She also became an advocate for ending racial discrimination in Northern cities. In 1861, Child helped edit and get published a slave narrative by Harriet Jacobs, entitled *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.* The account was a sensation in the North. Jacobs had been a slave on a North Carolina plantation where she endured years of sexual harassment by her master, among other depredations. She escaped in 1835 but could not bear being apart from her two children, so she hid in an attic crawlspace above her grandmother's quarters, boring small holes for light and air and so that she could catch glimpses of her children when they were able to visit her grandmother. There Jacobs stayed hidden, hardly able to move, during most of each day, for seven years. Finally, in 1842, Jacobs escaped to New York with the aid of the Philadelphia Vigilant Committee, but finding that city too accessible to slave hunters, she continued to Boston where local abolitionists purchased her freedom and the freedom of her children, who joined her there.

Meanwhile, Garrison continued to encourage women to take an active role in his movement. In 1832, Maria Weston Chapman and her three sisters formed the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society as a companion to Garrison's all-male New England Anti-Slavery Society. She became a leading Garrison ally, drafting petitions and helping to edit the *Liberator*. In 1836, a group of Black women in Boston staged a daring and dramatic courthouse rescue of two escaped female slaves, Eliza Small and Polly Ann Bates, in what became known as the Abolition Riot of 1836. The two had made it to Boston from Baltimore on the ship *Chickasaw*. But Matthew Turner, an agent of their claimed owner, beat them to Boston and demanded that the ship's captain Henry Eldridge release the women to him. Eldridge demanded to see a warrant but agreed to hold the women on his ship until the agent could secure one. Abolitionists in Boston got word of the detention and retained lawyer Samuel E. Sewall (the great-grandson of his namesake from the Salem witch-trials) on Small's and Bates's behalf. Sewall secured a writ of habeas corpus from Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, about whom we have heard much. The women were brought before the court. Shaw heard arguments from both sides about the reach of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, but ruled narrowly that the only question before him was the propriety of the ship captain detaining Small and Bates. On that question, it looked like the women would prevail, but Turner rose to ask for a warrant to arrest the women now under the Fugitive Slave Law. Suddenly, the Black women in the courtroom's gallery

rose to their feet. Someone shouted, “Go! Go!” One woman grabbed the deputy sheriff in the room and held him back. Small and Bates were hustled out of the courtroom circled by the crowd. They were pushed into a waiting carriage that took off at full speed, soon followed by the deputy sheriff, but he was too far behind and gave up the chase. Small and Bates made their way to freedom in Canada. But for the women of Boston who had participated in the rescue, it was an electrifying and rallying moment, evidence of their collective power. Momentum was starting to build for greater rights for the women themselves.

When the American Anti-Slavery Society announced that women would be permitted to attend the organization’s 1837 annual meeting in New York as observers only, Chapman decided to organize a national anti-slavery convention for women. It drew an audience of 200 people, including Stewart, future women’s-suffrage-movement leader Lucretia Mott, and two sisters originally from Charleston, South Carolina (who had left in protest against slavery) who were then living in Philadelphia, Angelina and Sarah Grimké.

Following the success of the women’s convention, Garrison and Chapman convinced the Grimké sisters to relocate to Massachusetts and to travel the state recruiting women to the abolition movement. The series of lectures, delivered by Angelina Grimké, were radical in their advocacy for women taking public roles. They were also hugely popular. In the summer of 1837 alone, Angelina gave over 80 public lectures, before audiences totaling, according to Barbara Berenson’s book, *Massachusetts in the Woman Suffrage Movement*, more than 40,000 people. The Grimké sisters collected thousands of signatures on anti-slavery petitions. By 1838, there were over 100 women’s antislavery societies in New England alone. Over two days in February 1838, Angelina Grimké addressed the Massachusetts General Court and an overflow crowd of 500 at the State House, in what is considered the first instance of an American woman addressing a legislative body. Later that year, Angelina married abolitionist Theodore D. Weld in a wedding presided over by two ministers, one white and one Black (New York abolitionist Theodore Sedgwick Wright), a radical statement at the time.

This brings us to the most important of all nineteenth-century women’s rights advocates in Massachusetts. Lucy Stone grew up in a West Brookfield, Massachusetts household that subscribed to Garrison’s *Liberator*. She was a teenager when she first heard about the Grimké sisters. They made an impression. In 1847, Stone became the first woman from Massachusetts to earn a college degree, graduating from Oberlin College in Ohio. That year she gave a lecture in Gardner, Massachusetts advocating for women’s education. She then moved to Boston to become a paid lecturer in the

abolition movement. She was a prolific lecturer, always advocating for women's rights at home, in addition to calling for the end of slavery in the American South.

The next year, Mott, who had grown up on Nantucket (and who would later help found Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania) and had attended the first women's national anti-slavery convention ten years earlier, traveled to Seneca Falls, New York to visit her sister. It would prove to be a momentous trip. While in Seneca Falls, Mott dropped in on her old-friend Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Stanton herself had lived in Boston in the 1840s while her husband worked at a law firm in the city. Over afternoon tea, the two women, along with Mott's sister Martha Coffin Wright, plus friends Mary Ann M'Clintock and Jane Hunt, came up with the idea to hold a women's rights convention. They planned it ten days out, at the local Methodist Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls. Despite the short notice, 300 people, both women and men, most notably Frederick Douglass, attended. At that convention, the participants debated 12 resolutions, including a call for women's suffrage. It would prove the most controversial at the convention and would pass with only a small majority and a single male: Douglass. It would prove to be the first significant milestone in the battle that culminated in the passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote in 1920.

In the spring of 1850, Stone, in Boston with several other women, decided to build on the regional success of the Seneca Falls Convention by planning what became known as the first "national" women's rights convention. They scheduled it for that fall at Worcester's Brinley Hall. It was attended by close to 1,000 people from 11 states. The Worcester convention is also notable as the first public appearance by former enslaved person Sojourner Truth (who was born Isabella Baumfree), who later became famous as an advocate for women's rights and racial equality. Truth lived in Florence, Massachusetts from 1850 to 1857.[43] The Worcester convention also featured a lecture by Ernestine Rose, the daughter of a Polish rabbi, who had immigrated to the United States in 1826. Rose argued in favor of property rights and equal pay for women. The convention adopted resolutions calling for suffrage rights and equality before the law regardless of gender or skin color. The organizers held another convention a year later, at Worcester City Hall, attended by 3,000 people. No longer quite so sensitive a topic, the call for women's suffrage became a central focus of the convention.

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[43] In 1851, at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, Truth delivered her famous "Ain't I a Woman" speech: "…That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helped me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And aren't I a woman? … I have borne five children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?"

When Stone and her associates planned the third national women's convention, they decided to expand its reach beyond Massachusetts and selected Syracuse, New York. The convention was attended by another Massachusetts-native, Susan B. Anthony, then living in Rochester, New York. Anthony had been introduced by Amelia Bloomer to Stanton the year before in Seneca Falls. Bloomer was best known for arguing that women should wear more practical and comfortable clothes than the dresses of the day, leading to the "bloomer" outfit of a loose-fitting dress or skirt over baggy trousers. Stone apparently wore a bloomer outfit to the 1852 Syracuse convention, but found it generated negative reaction and therefore was a distraction from the central message of women's rights.

Stone continued to organize national women's rights conventions around the country, while maintaining a grueling paid lecture schedule. In this, she increasingly worked with new allies Anthony and Stanton. Stone also believed it was time to supplement all the talking with action. In 1853, Stone submitted a women's suffrage petition with 2,000 signatures to the Massachusetts Senate Committee on Voter Qualifications. The Committee declined to act on it, noting that the number of signatories was a mere fraction of all the women in the state. Stone had more success two years later in advocating for the adoption of a state law in Massachusetts recognizing the property rights of married women.

In 1855, Stone made news when she decided to keep her last name upon her marriage to ardent abolitionist Henry Browne Blackwell, a statement of independence that led other women around the country to form Lucy Stone Leagues. The couple relocated to New Jersey and soon welcomed a daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, who herself would in time become a leader of the women's rights movement. While Lucy Stone stepped back somewhat from her political activities while raising her young daughter in the late 1850s and during the Civil War years of 1860 to 1865, others in Massachusetts stepped forward to take on leadership roles in the movement. Two African-American women, Sarah Parker Remond and Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, are of particular note during this period. Remond came from a family of abolitionists from Salem. She became known for her lawsuit against the Howard Athenaeum, which we learned about, and as one of the Anti-Slavery Society's most effective lecturers in the 1850s, before moving to Europe during the Civil War to help build support for the Union cause. Ruffin, whose husband George Lewis Ruffin would later become the first Black graduate of Harvard Law School and the first Black judge in the North, was an active recruiter for the Fifty-Fourth and Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts regiments in the Civil War. After the war, she started publishing the *Women's Era*, the first paper published by and for African-

American women in the country. Later in her career, she founded the New Era Club for Black women, and organized the first national conference for Black women, which was held in Boston in 1895. In 1910, she was a charter member of the NAACP.

As for Stone during this period, she continued to strategize with her allies Anthony and Stanton. The triumvirate, however, would soon confront a foundational conflict that would split them apart, and create a schism in the women's rights movement for decades.

With the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, the end of the Civil War in April 1865, and the ratification of the 13th Amendment in December 1865, the main abolition movement turned to the issues of Black citizenship, equal rights, and franchise. There was great expectation that women's rights would be included in the push toward a 14th (citizenship and equal protection) and 15th (voting rights) amendments. Stone, Anthony, Stanton, and their allies in the women's rights movement would be greatly disappointed. Key male leaders, many of whom, like Frederick Douglass and Wendell Phillips, had been essential allies of the women's rights movement, now turned their backs on these women who had done so much for abolitionism. The move was partly practical. The notion of suffrage and equal rights for women lacked the broad support among the Republicans in power following the Civil War that such rights held for the newly freed slaves (as well as Black freemen). There was, perhaps legitimate, concern that putting the two movements together risked jeopardizing both. Better, it was argued, to sequence the causes, securing rights for the Black population first, and then later taking up the cause of women's rights. There was also a political component. The Republican leaders of the drive toward adoption of the 14th and 15th Amendments felt confident that newly enfranchised Black voters would be solidly Republican, but the leaders were less sure of the voting sympathies of women, based on the sexist notion that women could not think or vote independently from their husbands. Finally, some people argued that Black men's service in the Union Army made them particularly deserving of the vote, ignoring, of course, the tremendous contribution of women to the Union cause, like Massachusetts-native Clara Barton, who served as a Union nurse during the Civil War and later founded the Red Cross.

The crisis for the women's movement then, was whether to abide by the sequential approach, or to oppose efforts to secure ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments unless it included women's rights. It divided Stone from Anthony and Stanton and led to a revisionist history of the movement that discounted the leading role that Stone had played for two decades. To this day, Stone has little of the name recognition of Susan B. Anthony or Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Stone and her husband Blackwell protested the decision to proceed only on the Black-rights approach, but

once sequentialism became apparent, they threw their efforts behind adoption of the 14th and 15th Amendments. Anthony and Stanton could not do so. In hindsight, we know that while the 14th and 15th Amendments ultimately were ratified, women's suffrage would have to wait until the original leaders of the movement were all long since deceased, and a women's Equal Rights Amendment has never come to fruition.

The schism ended any cooperation between the New York (Anthony and Stanton) branch of the movement and the New England branch (Stone had moved back to Boston in 1868). The leaders of the movement in New England formed a new organization called the New England Woman Suffrage Association and elected Julia Ward Howe, author of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," its president. The new organization began publishing a newspaper, the *Woman's Advocate*, as a rival to the *Revolution*, published out of New York. The dispute took on racist overtones as the New York publication decried Black male enfranchisement before white woman enfranchisement.[44]

With the passage of both amendments, the schism in the women's rights movement would not heal. Anthony advocated a new approach: arguing that the 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the laws effectively granted equal voting rights to women. To test such an argument in court, however, the movement would need a "case or controversy" as courts decline to issue merely advisory opinions on legal questions. Therefore, Anthony and a number of supporters decided to go to polling stations during the November 1872 election and attempt to vote, with the expectation that they would be arrested, creating the "case" necessary to test the 14th Amendment argument.[45] Anthony was arrested, convicted, and fined $100, but because the trial judge did not attempt to collect the fine, she was left without recourse to an appellate court that might weigh in on the Constitutional question. Nevertheless, the bold act of civil disobedience made Susan B. Anthony a national celebrity, a rock star status in the movement that she holds today. (One can visit the Susan B. Anthony Museum & House in Rochester, New York, run by the National Park Service, as well as the privately-run Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum in Adams, Massachusetts.) Anthony parlayed the publicity into writing, with Stanton, a three-volume history of the women's suffrage

[44] In 1869, by act of the General Court, Massachusetts also gave the franchise to its Native American residents. But by so conferring full citizenship, it took away any special status to the state's then ten reservations, effectively eliminating native communal land holdings. This made Indian land more easily privately alienable. As nineteenth-century Massachusetts Native Americans struggled with poverty, more and more traditionally Indian lands were sold off. Today, the state's historic tribes have been left largely landless.

[45] In 1870, more than 50 women managed to vote in a local election in the then-independent town of Hyde Park (now a neighborhood of Boston). Someone had placed placards around town inviting women to join the election, and on voting day, the town moderator, Sylvanus Cobb Jr., presiding over the polling station at town hall, accepted the ballots. This appears to have been a one-time event in Hyde Park (until general suffrage 50 years later).

movement through 1885. Their history, argues historian Berenson, created the narrative that places the 1848 Seneca Falls convention as the defining event for the movement, deemphasized the importance of the subsequent national conventions that drew much larger crowds than Seneca Falls, and largely ignores the role that Lucy Stone played in the movement. Stone, for her part, complained that such a multi-volume history was premature, as if the abolition movement had written its history before the Emancipation Proclamation, but Stone never wrote a counter-narrative. She spent her remaining years continuing to advocate for the movement. She remained popular; in 1873, she drew 3,000 people to Faneuil Hall in 1873 to hear her argue that taxation of women's property was without legitimacy until such time that women had the franchise, creating an obvious parallel with the American Revolution.

In the meantime, the movement for women's suffrage in Massachusetts lost some of its momentum. By the 1870s, there had been a political shift, with the Republican party of Lincoln moving away from its radical base and increasingly to become the party of Gilded Age industrialists and bankers, for whom women's suffrage was not a priority. Meanwhile the Democratic Party in Massachusetts had become the party of the Irish Catholic immigrants, who tended to be patriarchal and traditional on issues such as women's rights. The General Court rejected a women's suffrage bill in 1872, although the General Court did pass a law in 1879 permitting women to vote in local school committee elections.[46] Multiple efforts in the 1880s to build on this small legislative success were rebuffed by increasingly large margins. The women's suffrage movement was becoming marginalized as both major American political parties, at least in Massachusetts, became increasingly socially conservative. Catholic clergy in the state warned that women's enfranchisement would interfere with their duties in the home. In 1893, the General Court voted down a bill to grant women suffrage in municipal elections. Later that year, Lucy Stone died of cancer in Dorchester. According to historian Berenson, her daughter recorded her last words as "Make the world better."

With Anthony and Stanton now in their 70s, and other early movement leaders like Lucretia Mott deceased (in 1880), it was time for a new generation to take over. One of the first initiatives was to unify the different branches of the movement into a single National American Woman

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[46] Another civil rights movement emerged in Massachusetts in 1879. That year, Ponca Chief Standing Bear and several other representatives of the Ponca and Omaha tribes, including Omaha Indian Susette "Bright Eyes" LaFlesche, spoke at Faneuil Hall about Indian rights. Among those inspired by the speeches was Massachusetts-native Helen Hunt Jackson. She spent the next two years working on the book *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealings with Some of the Indian Tribes*. The highly critical book caught the attention of the United States Interior Department who hired Jackson to report further on the treatment of American Indians in the West.

Suffrage Association, although Anthony and Stanton would be appointed its original leaders. The organization would renew efforts at change at the federal level after several decades of a more localized approach. The organization, however, would suffer racism charges as it sidestepped questions about Jim Crow laws that were disenfranchising Black men in its efforts to secure Southern support for women's suffrage. After Anthony and Stanton both passed away, leadership of the national movement passed to the Reverend Anna Howard Shaw, who had received a medical degree from Boston University.

By 1900, women were far more integrated into the economy than they had been mid-century. As Berenson writes, "A complex urban economy – and inventions such as the typewriter, telephone, and department store – led to a demand for women to fill positions as typists, bookkeepers, telephone operators, and sales clerks." Expanded public transportation, as well as a new invention – bicycles – opened more opportunities for women. And more women were attending college. In Massachusetts, women's colleges like Mount Holyoke in South Hadley (1837), Wellesley (1870), Smith in Northampton (1871), and Radcliffe in Cambridge (1894) were turning out more and more graduates each year. There was a new energy, and new leaders emerged. Maud Wood Park, who graduated from Radcliffe in 1898, attended the 1900 national convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in Washington, D.C., the last convention presided over by Anthony. Park was shocked at how few young women attended the national convention. Park organized the College Equal Suffrage League and the Boston Equal Suffrage Association for Good Government to expand the reach of the movement. While Park focused on college-educated women, Mary Kenney O'Sullivan, who moved to Boston from Chicago in 1894, focused on immigrant and working-class women, co-founding the Women's Trade Union League. That League soon had a department devoted to supporting the women's suffrage movement. By 1908, the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association was the second largest suffrage association in the country after New York.

With new people came new tactics. The founders of the movement a generation earlier had focused on lecturing and pamphleting. Holding public open-air meetings, staging protests and marches, handing out leaflets and buttons, going door to door canvassing, and engaging in acts of civil disobedience all became part of the movement's tool kit in the early twentieth century. Women in Boston became highly organized politically, with ward chairs and precinct captains. For the first time since the days of Garrison and Douglass, prominent men like future Supreme Court justice

Louis Brandeis became public supporters. In 1912, Bull Moose Party candidate for President, Theodore Roosevelt, came out in favor of women's suffrage. Momentum was building for change.

In 1914 and 1915, Boston hosted huge parades, with crowds estimated in the hundreds of thousands, to promote women's suffrage. The Massachusetts General Court was finally persuaded: It endorsed a state constitutional amendment to give women the franchise. The issue would be in the hands of the voters of Massachusetts in the election of November 1915. But of course, the voters of Massachusetts were 100 percent men. Women would not be able to directly participate in the decision to extend the franchise in state elections. That did not prevent women from campaigning. Activists spread across the street. They fostered support from state religious and political leaders. They held rallies. During the campaign, suffragist Florence Luscomb, an MIT trained architect, gave over 200 speeches in support of the proposed amendment. On election day, 8,000 women held signs at polling stations around the Commonwealth. Not a single woman was allowed to vote. While 133,000 men voted in favor of the state constitutional amendment, nearly three times that many voted against it – a crushing defeat in the state that founded the movement.

It was time to refocus on a federal constitutional amendment. But by 1917, the country was entering the Great War in Europe. Many women's organizations shifted their focus to supporting the war effort. But surprisingly, national momentum in favor of women's suffrage increased. In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson announced his support for a constitutional amendment enfranchising women. When Congress endorsed the proposed amendment, it was up to the states to ratify it. Teresa Crowley and Gertrude Halladay Leonard would lead the Massachusetts ratification campaign. On June 25, 1919, Massachusetts became the eighth state to ratify the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. It passed in 1920 and the language "[t]he right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex" became the law of the land. In 2003, the City of Boston dedicated the Boston Women's Memorial on the Commonwealth Avenue Mall. The statue by sculptor Meredith Bergman honored Lucy Stone, along with Abigail Adams and Phillis Wheatley. In 2020, the organization Suffrage100MA, founded by lawyer Fredie Kay, led a centennial celebration of the passage of the 19th Amendment.

But we have gotten ahead of ourselves. At the close of the 1840s when the women's rights movement was emerging out of the abolition movement in Massachusetts, Boston was about to secure its position as the heart of the North's antebellum abolition movement. Already considered on the radical end of the abolition movement, Boston's position was further radicalized due to the

Great Compromise of 1850, negotiated in the North by Massachusetts' own Senator, the "Great Orator," Daniel Webster. In 1849, its population booming at the height of the Gold Rush, California applied for statehood as a free state. At the time, there were 15 slave and 15 free states. The admittance of California threatened to disrupt what had been a delicate balance holding the union together. To preserve the union, Webster negotiated a deal with Henry Clay of Kentucky, and John Calhoun of South Carolina. The heart of the bargain was the admittance of California as a free state in exchange for a much more robust Fugitive Slave Law. Webster advocated for Congress to pass the agreement as necessary to preserve the union. It passed and was signed into law by President Millard Fillmore in September 1850.[47]

Abolitionists in Boston reacted in horror to the agreement. The federal Fugitive Slave Law dated to 1793, but by the 1840s, those invested in the Southern institution of slavery feared that open defiance of its requirements by states in the North was encouraging slaves to escape north. Massachusetts played a significant role in stoking Southern concerns. In 1836, the state's Supreme Judicial Court adopted the "freedom principle," whereby the moment a slave stepped foot in the Commonwealth, he or she became free. The landmark decision by Lemuel Shaw (who would later uphold school segregation in Boston), in an action brought by the Commonwealth on behalf of a six-year-old enslaved girl named Med who had accompanied her owner on a visit to Boston, provided that "all persons coming within the limits of a state [are] entitled to the privileges which those laws [of the state] confer, … this rule applies as well to blacks as whites." In 1837, slave catcher Edward Prigg was charged in Pennsylvania with violating an 1826 state law that made it a felony to evade that state's procedure for the rendition of a fugitive slave. Prigg's case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which overturned his conviction. In the complicated ruling, Justice Joseph Story from Marblehead, Massachusetts ruled that states could not interfere with an owner's right to retrieve its property (a fugitive slave), but at the same time, states were not compelled to participate in a federal law on the subject—that was the responsibility of federal officials. Story would shortly rule in another landmark slave case with a Massachusetts angle. In the winter of 1839,

[47] Webster was first elected to Congress from Massachusetts in 1813. He served as a United States Senator from 1827 to 1841, and again from 1845 to 1850, resigning his seat twice to serve as Secretary of State. Known of course for his oratory skills, he most famously replied to the 1830 threat of secession made by South Carolina Senator Robert Hayne by declaring, "Liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable!" But his reputation would forever be tarnished by his singular commitment to union at all costs leading to his deal with Clay and Calhoun that would preserve slavery. Webster was one of the founders of the American Whig party. He sought the party's nomination for president in 1836 and 1852 but was bypassed by his party both times. He died later in 1852 at the age of 70.

the *Amistad* sailed from the coast of Mendiland in today's Sierra Leone, Africa with 53 kidnapped Mende men and women on board, headed for sugar plantations in Cuba, at the time a territory of Spain. En route, the captives, led by Sengbe Pieh, later known as Joseph Cinqué, revolted. The captain and other officers were killed, the rebels ordering the remaining crew to turn the ship around. But rather than sailing east back across the Atlantic, the crew steered north-easterly, following the coast up the Atlantic seaboard, where the ship was captured by the United States Coast Guard off Montauk Point, Long Island. The Mende captives were taken to New Haven, Connecticut and charged with murder. A group of New York abolitionists raised funds to hire former President and Massachusetts-native John Quincy Adams to represent the defendants. Adams argued that the Mende were free people, illegally taken into captivity, and therefore acted in self-defense against their captors. The trial court agreed, and the case then made its way to the United States Supreme Court. On March 9, 1841, the Supreme Court affirmed in an opinion written by Justice Story. He wrote, "It is also a most important consideration, in the present case, which ought not to be lost sight of, that, supposing these African negroes not to be slaves, but kidnapped, and free negroes, the treaty with Spain cannot be obligatory upon them; and the United States are bound to respect their rights as much as those of Spanish subjects." The South saw all of these legal decisions as direct threats to the institution of slavery.

In 1842, escaped slaves George and Rebecca Latimer had stowed away on a steamship in Norfolk, Virginia bound for Boston. Upon arrival, they were spotted by a former employee of the Latimer's enslaver, James Gray. Gray immediately came to Boston to begin extradition proceedings, that resulted in authorities taking George Latimer into captivity. Word spread quickly and about 300 Black men gathered in Faneuil Hall in a protest. The sheriff wanted nothing to do with this dispute and informed Gray that he would not hold Latimer any further. A group of supporters from the Tremont Temple raised enough money to then buy the Latimers' freedom.[48] But the incident made abolitionists in the city realize that escaped slaves were not safe even as far north as Boston. This prompted, in 1843, the General Court to enact the Personal Liberty Act, modeled on the ruling in

[48] The Latimers' son Lewis became famous in his own right. He was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts in 1848. During the Civil War, Lewis Latimer served in the Navy and then became an inventor, first in Massachusetts (where he received patents for an improved toilet system for railroad cars, and he worked with Alexander Graham Bell's telephone patent petition), and later in Connecticut (where he came up with a modification of the electric light bulb filament to reduce breakages).

Prigg's case, that prohibited state officials from arresting alleged fugitives in aid of southern slave catchers.[49]

It was in this context that strengthening the federal Fugitive Slave Law, and overturning inconsistent laws in the Northern states, became a Southern priority. Under the 1850 revised law, a slave owner or his agent, identifying someone believed to be an escaped slave, could apply for a warrant or arrest the person on the spot. The matter would then be brought before a federal judge or commissioner, who would be paid $10 per case in which a certificate of removal was issued, but only $5 if it was not. There was no right to a jury and no right of appeal. The alleged fugitive had no right to testify. The law went further and barred collateral attacks on the process through writs of habeas corpus. And for those contemplating resistance to the process, the law imposed $1,000 fines and up to six months' incarceration for those who interfered in the return of an alleged fugitive slave. Worse, the law commanded individual citizens to assist in the rendition of fugitive slaves when called upon. The law was retroactive, applying to all fugitive slaves. The law provided no protection for free blacks who were kidnapped into slavery.

Boston had a growing population of people who had escaped from slavery in the South. It is estimated that a quarter of all fugitive slaves passed through Boston, and many stayed on. One estimate from October 1850 put the number of fugitive slaves in the city in the thousands. There were numerous Underground Railroad stops around the region, including the home of Lewis and Harriet Hayden (who we will get to) on Phillips Street, and the Twelfth Baptist Church also on Phillips Street (which became known as the Fugitive Slave's Church), where the Reverend Leonard Grimes is known to have aided dozens of escaped slaves.[50] Many of these Underground Railroad stops across Massachusetts are documented in Rosalyn Delores Elder's well-researched book *Exploring the Legacy*, and some can be visited, like the Jackson Homestead and Museum in Newton. The Underground Railroad was a loose network from Pennsylvania to Canada of individuals and organizations devoted to helping escaped enslaved persons secure their freedom. It is "an umbrella term for local groups that employed numerous methods to assist fugitives, some public and entirely legal, some flagrant violations of the law," Eric Foner wrote in *Gateway to Freedom*. Most fugitives

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[49] The General Court strengthened the law in 1855 by providing fines of up to $5,000 or five-years' imprisonment for the improper detention of persons suspected of being escaped slaves.

[50] Grimes would spend 26 years at the Twelfth Baptist, until his death in 1874. He would be succeeded as its minister by George Washington Williams, a Civil War veteran and the first African American to graduate from the Newton Theological Seminary. In 1906, the church relocated to Shawmut Avenue in the South End, following the migration of Boston's Black residents to that neighborhood.

who made it north came from border states, especially Maryland. They were mostly young men, although perhaps the most famous of the escaped slaves from Maryland was Harriet Tubman[51], who would return multiple times to help others escape.[52] The fugitives took many different paths out of the South, some coming on foot, while others hid on trains or ships aided by friendly free Black workers in these industries.[53] Especially after 1850, the goal was to get the escaped slaves as far north as possible, to cities like New York, Boston, Syracuse, Rochester, and even up into Canada. The activists in these cities were generally public about their actions and rarely faced consequences for their participation in moving fugitives. Indeed, speeches by fugitive slaves about their experiences often attracted large crowds in the North.[54]

The free Black community of Boston came together to take care of the new arrivals. Lewis Hayden provided clothes from his store; Robert Morris provided legal counsel; and John Rock, Boston's first Black doctor, provided medical care. William Cooper Nell worked tirelessly to find shelter and transportation for newly arriving fugitives. The Fugitive Slave Law put much of the community in peril. And no city was viewed as a bigger target for southern slave catchers than Boston. Hundreds of escaped slaves quickly fled Boston, as did many free Blacks fearful of kidnapping under the new federal regime. Boston's population of Black sailors, numbering in the hundreds in 1850, abandoned the city as well.

In October 1850, 3,500 people attended the largest meeting ever held in Faneuil Hall. Following speeches by Frederick Douglass and the abolitionist Unitarian minister Theodore

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[51] Another famous Maryland escaped slave was Frederick Douglass, who in 1838 took a combination of trains, ferries, and steamboats from Baltimore to New York City, before making his way to New Bedford later that year. While living in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1844-1845, Douglass wrote *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, which would be a catalyst to the abolition movement gaining broader public support. Douglass's work was published by Garrison's press.

[52] While Tubman is no doubt the most-famous, and probably the most prolific, conductor on the Underground Railroad, Black New York abolitionist David Ruggles, who moved to the village of Florence, in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1842, was known to have helped as many as 600 enslaved persons escape north, most notably Frederick Douglass.

[53] One of the most famous escapes was by Henry "Box" Brown, who worked as a tobacco processor in Richmond, Virginia. In 1849, Massachusetts-born Samuel "Red Boot" Smith packed Brown, who was not a small man at 200 pounds, in a rectangular box and shipped him via rail and steamboat to Philadelphia. Brown spent some of the 24-hour journey upside down in the small box, but emerged well enough to continue his journey (out of the box) to Boston, where he developed a "moving panorama" which he took on the road to tell his story. After helping two other slaves escape in this manner, Smith was arrested and jailed in Virginia.

[54] Interestingly, there was some ambivalence within the abolition movement about the Underground Railroad, according to Foner's book *Gateway to Freedom*. While all acknowledged that it was the product of good intentions, some feared that too much energy and resources were being devoted to helping individual enslaved persons escape, rather than focusing on attacking the institution of slavery itself.

Parker[55], the attendees agreed to reorganize and expand the Boston Vigilance Committee, dedicated to resisting the Fugitive Slave Law. They would have their chances. At the beginning of November 1850, two slave hunters arrived in Boston bearing a warrant for William and Ellen Craft, who had escaped from a plantation in Georgia two years earlier. Their journey to Boston had been a harrowing one, the product of long-planning by the couple. As slaves in good standing with their master, they had secured a travel pass for Christmas. For the escape while on leave, because Ellen was light-skinned, they had her dress as a man, accompanied by her "slave" William (she had to dress as a man because even white women in the South could not travel alone with a slave at the time). They wrapped Ellen's arm in a poultice to make it look lame in case she was asked to sign her name to any registries during the journey as she was illiterate. There were, of course, no direct train rides from Georgia to Boston at the time. Through a combination of trains and steamers, they went from Macon to Savannah, to Charleston, Richmond, Baltimore, and then to Philadelphia, over five days. From there, the Philadelphia Vigilance Society helped them travel by the Underground Railroad to Boston. In the abolitionist community of Boston, their arrival was big news, promoted in the *Liberator*. To celebrate the Crafts' achievement, Black abolitionist William Wells Brown took them on a 60-stop speaking tour across Massachusetts. Back in Boston, they stayed with Hayden at his home at 66 Phillips Street on Beacon Hill and started to make a life. When the two slave hunters arrived in Boston looking for them, the Boston Vigilance Committee sprung to action, hiding the Crafts and harassing the hunters. When the slave hunters showed up at Hayden's home looking for the Crafts, they found the house barricaded and guarded by kegs of gunpowder. The slave hunters were told they would not survive the night in Boston. They quickly left the city. The Crafts' old slave master, however, would not give up. When word reached Boston that he had petitioned U.S. President Millard Fillmore to send U.S. Marshalls to Boston, the Crafts continued on to Halifax and then to London, where they lived for the next 19 years. The Crafts learned to read and write and wrote a book about their journey called *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*.

But with the Fugitive Slave Law the law of the land, Southern slave owners were going to keep coming after their escaped slaves. Boston could not relax. In February of 1851, federal

[55] Parker had made a name for himself within the abolitionist movement with his "Letter to a Southern Slaveholder," in which he decried the hypocrisy of those who used the Bible to justify slavery. He was an influential orator as well. In one of his famous speeches, he said, "I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight, I can divine it by conscience. *And from what I see I am sure it bends toward justice*." Martin Luther King Jr. himself would memorably borrow this phrase.

marshals arrested Shadrach Minkins while he was working as a waiter in Boston. Minkins was held in a locked-down state courthouse. His lawyer Morris's habeas corpus petition was not received well by Judge Shaw, upset at the local efforts to undermine the Great Compromise negotiated by his friend Senator Webster. Not finding a receptive audience for his legal arguments, Morris opened the doors to the courthouse and allowed Hayden and 20 armed Black men to storm in. Minkins got up to run, but two guards warned him that he'd be shot if he left. But the Black activists overwhelmed the guards and they ushered Minkins out and carried him to hiding place on Beacon Hill. That night, Minkins was smuggled out of Boston past the searching police, and helped to escape to Canada. A furious President Fillmore called for the arrest of the provocateurs and authorized federal troops in Boston to respond to any further defiance of the federal statute. Morris, Hayden, and the other rescuers were arrested.[56] Morris was defended by United States Senator John Hale from New Hampshire. Hale and co-counsel Richard Dana called former Boston mayor Josiah Quincy as a character witness, and none other than Judge Shaw himself to testify that he had not seen Morris participate in the rescue of Minkins. Dana and Hale also played to the Boston jury's discomfort with the Fugitive Slave Law. Morris was acquitted, as were the other defendants.

The federal troops would have their chance. In March 1851, Thomas Sims had run away from a plantation and hid on a boat due to sail from Savannah to Boston. After a two-week sail and with Boston in sight, Sims was discovered on board and locked in the captain's cabin. Sims managed to jimmy the lock, steal a lifeboat, and row to South Boston. However, Sims's attempt to send a telegram back to Savannah where his wife and children remained behind led to his capture, but not before stabbing one of his captors. Sims was brought to the federal courthouse on Court Street. The state refused to take him because he had not violated any state law and the federal government had no jail in Boston, so the decision was made to lock him in a room in the courthouse, put bars on the window and chains around the building, and circle the facility with hundreds of Boston police officers and armed federal guards. A thousand members of the Boston Vigilance Committee

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[56] Hayden is one of the most fascinating men from this period. In 1844, Hayden and his wife Harriet Bell Hayden, escaped slavery in Kentucky, taking the Underground Railroad to Michigan, then into Canada, before coming to Boston in 1846 and settling at 66 Phillips Street on the north slope of Beacon Hill (then considered part of West Boston, later the West End). It became probably the most important stop on the Underground Railroad in Boston. (Today, the home is a National Historic Site and a stop on the Black Heritage Trail of Boston.) Hayden opened a clothing store on Cambridge Street, growing it into one of the largest and most successful Black-owned businesses of the era. He was one of the founders of the Boston Vigilance Committee. He later became a Freemason, helping to found a series of Black lodges. During the Civil War, he was a champion of the formation of all-Black regiments and served as a recruiter for the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts; he would lose a son during the war. In 1873, he was elected to the Massachusetts General Court from Boston. Near the end of his life, he lobbied for the erection of a statue in honor of Crispus Attucks.

convened on Boston Common to hear abolitionist Wendell Phillips (son of Boston's first mayor) rail against the stationing of federal troops in Boston, the first, he claimed, since "the red-coats marched up Long Wharf."[57] Unitarian minister Thomas Wentworth Higginson tried to organize a rescue mission, even seeking to commission ships to intercept any that might be ferrying Sims back to slavery. Lawyers led by Charles Sumner filed a series of petitions in court. But the law was clear. U.S. Marines guarded Sims as he was marched from Court Street down State Street to a waiting warship on Long Wharf to ferry him back to slavery. Sims would spend 12 more years in slavery in Mississippi, but in 1863, he escaped again and returned to Boston.[58]

By this point, the abolition movement in Boston was in a frenzy. At the time, U.S. Senators were selected by state legislatures. In April 1851, the Massachusetts General Court elected radical antislavery candidate Charles Sumner to replace Daniel Webster. Meanwhile, the Boston Vigilance Committee stepped up its efforts and helped more than 300 fugitive slaves escape over the next three years, coordinating passage through the Underground Railroad to Canada. In 1852, Boston publisher and Vigilance Committee member John Jewett published a book called *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written by Harriett Beecher Stowe.[59] It became the first American novel to sell more than a million copies. More than anything else, the book helped legitimize and popularize the abolition movement.[60] Stowe's book was also a huge seller in England, and is credited with helping to keep the British neutral during the Civil War despite their appetite for cotton from the American South.

In 1853, as the Kansas-Nebraska Act was nearing passage, which would have permitted the future of slavery in the territories to be determined by popular vote, stoking fear pro-slavery forces

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[57] Phillips would enjoy a long career as one of Boston's greatest radicals. He was the son of the first mayor of Boston, John Phillips, and started his career firmly a part of the establishment, attending Boston Latin School, Harvard College, and Harvard Law School, before opening a law practice in 1834. Phillips was turned on to the abolitionist cause by Garrison in 1836, and established his own voice in a memorable speech at Faneuil Hall in 1837 protesting the assassination of abolitionist editor Elijah Lovejoy in Alton, Illinois by a pro-slavery mob. Phillips became a leader of the movement, and later took up the causes of women's and Native American rights. He also advocated against the death penalty and in favor of the rights of labor.

[58] In an interesting twist in history, the United States Marshal who had been responsible for returning Sims to slavery, Charles Devens Jr., had been so troubled by his responsibility that he afterward tried, unsuccessfully, to buy Sims's freedom. After Sims managed to reach Boston a second time, Devens, upon being appointed United States Attorney General in 1877, gave Sims a job in the United States Department of Justice. Devens had served as a general during the Civil War and (the now inactive) Fort Devens, in central Massachusetts, is named in his honor.

[59] Stowe was born in Connecticut. Her father was the fiery Calvinist and nativist preacher Lyman Beecher. She wrote her most famous book while living in Brunswick, Maine, where her husband was a teacher at Bowdoin College.

[60] The book continued in the tradition of those in Boston who had written eloquently about the immorality of slavery. In 1842, poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow had published a collection called *Poems on Slavery*. Perhaps the most powerful was "The Witnesses," with the closing stanza: "These are the woes of slaves, They glare from the abyss; They cry, from unknown graves, 'We are the Witnesses!'"

would stream across the Kansas border to vote in favor of slavery, the abolition fever in Boston was nearing a boil. On May 24 of that year, escaped slave Anthony Burns was arrested and held in the federal courthouse.

This time, the abolitionists turned violent, led by Higginson, storming the courthouse with axes and killing a guard. But the guards rebuffed the attack (Higginson himself was cut on the chin by a guard's saber, leaving a scar of which Higginson would thereafter proudly display) and after a trial (Burns was represented by Robert Morris, who had been the initial lawyer in the Roberts school segregation case, as well as by white attorney Richard Henry Dana, Jr.[61]), Burns was ordered returned to the South. More than 50,000 Bostonians turned out to protest as he was marched down Long Wharf to a waiting boat. Even after the boat departed, Bostonians organized on Burns's behalf. The Reverend Leonard Grimes, of the Twelfth Baptist Church, himself an escaped slave who had spent two years in a prison in Richmond for helping other enslaved persons escape, was able to raise the $1,500 demanded for Burns's freedom. Burns returned to Boston (he would go on to study at Oberlin College in Ohio, move to Canada and become a minister).

But the tension between the free and slave states was only mounting. The Kansas-Nebraska Act was finally passed the next year, 1854. With Kansas poised to become a state, whichever way its vote tipped would change the balance of slave and free states in the country. This was a critical issue then for the abolitionists in Massachusetts. They helped form the New England Emigrant Aid Company, with backing from Massachusetts industrialist Amos Lawrence. The organization provided financial support for anti-slavery immigrants (about 1,250 of them) to move from the East to Kansas to increase the vote for a free Kansas. As a destination for the immigrants, the organization founded Lawrence, Kansas, named after its biggest benefactor. Antislavery colonists from New England went on to found Topeka and Manhattan, Kansas. To counter this movement, hundreds of pro-slavery activists crossed the border from Missouri into the territory. Violence exploded across the territory, starting a period known as Bleeding Kansas.

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[61] Dana was one of the most interesting of historical Bostonians, the great-grandson of one of the founders of the Sons of Liberty, Richard Dana. Despite an upbringing of privilege and education at Harvard, Dana enlisted as a merchant seaman at the age of 19 in 1834 and traveled to California on the brig *Pilgrim*. He wrote *Two Years Before the Mast* in 1840 about his travel experiences, providing the country with perhaps the most detailed description of the West Coast then published. Dana then enrolled at Harvard Law School, became a prominent abolitionist lawyer, helped found the anti-slavery Free Soil Party, served as United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts during the Civil War, and was nominated as minster to Great Britain but saw his nomination blocked in the U.S. Senate. His son Richard Henry Dana III married Edith Longfellow, the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's daughter.

In May 1856, Senator Sumner gave a speech on the floor of the Senate titled the "Crime Against Kansas," railing against violence that he claimed had been incited by the proslavery partisans in that state. Two days later, violence would come to the Senate chamber, as Representative Preston Brooks attacked Sumner, beating him repeatedly about the head and face with his cane until Sumner lay unconscious and covered in blood and Brooks's cane had shattered. Sumner was severely injured, but the attack stripped any pretense of a political resolution between the states.[62] In the election of 1860, the caning of Sumner rallied the North around the candidacy of Abraham Lincoln.

In December 1860, South Carolina voted to secede from the Union. Within two months, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas also voted to secede. Despite Boston's vocal abolitionist movement, there was also great unease about what was looking like the coming crisis. Southern cotton was the input to the region's burgeoning textile industry, and the region's economy was integrated with the South's in other ways.[63] Then Fort Sumter in South Carolina was attacked. On April 15, 1861, President Lincoln issued a proclamation for each Northern state to commit 75,000 militiamen in response to the Southern rebellion. Massachusetts was the first to respond. Massachusetts Governor John Andrew called out the state regiments to gather at Faneuil Hall.

Just two days later, the Sixth Massachusetts regiment departed for Washington by train. The regiment had been formed in 1855 during a reorganization of the state militia, with units whose history dated as far back as the 1745 Siege of Louisbourg, and, at the time of its departure, consisted of 11 companies of men. Their train stopped in Baltimore on April 19, the anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, a coincidence that did not go unnoticed at the time. At the time,

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[62] Some of the abolitionists in Massachusetts were increasingly coming to their own conclusion on this point. In 1859, a group of radical abolitionists led by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Samuel Gridley Howe, and Theodore Parker formed the Secret Six to help fund John Brown's raid on the federal armory Harper's Ferry and to secretly provide arms to Virginia slaves (the weapons were supplied by Medford businessman George Luther Stearns). John Brown, who had been born in Connecticut, had his own connections to Massachusetts – he lived in Springfield from 1846 to 1851. These were critical years in Brown's turn to militant abolitionism. Brown joined the Sanford Street Free Church in Springfield, which had been founded a few years earlier by Black abolitionists, and it was where Brown heard abolition speeches from the likes of Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth. In the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., is a famous daguerreotype of Brown taken while he still lived in Springfield in 1846 or 1847 by pioneering African-American daguerreotypist and abolitionist Augustus Washington at his studio in Hartford. In the image, Brown stands with a hand-painted flag believed to be the colors of the "Subterranean Pass Way," Brown's planned, more militant, alternative to the Underground Railroad that would run through the Alleghany Mountains.

[63] Charles Sumner for his part had not been shy in attacking Northern mill owners who did business with outhern cotton plantations. In an 1848 speech in Worcester, Sumner had stormed that there was "an unhallowed union – conspiracy, let it be called – between two remote sections: … between the cotton planters and fleshmongers of Louisiana and Mississippi and the cotton-spinners and traffickers of New England, – between the lords of the lash and the lords of the loom."

passengers on trains coming into Baltimore from the north to President Street station had to disembark and take horsecars (carriages on rails pulled by horses) across town to the Camden Street station for departure to Washington, D.C. As the companies of troops from the Sixth Massachusetts took the horsecars, a pro-secessionist mob started growing and threatening the troops. The first seven companies of the Sixth Massachusetts made it to Camden Street.

But as the mob grew, reaching into the thousands, it completely blocked the horsecars of the remaining four companies. About 220 men had to get off the carriages and continue to Camden Street on foot. People in the crowd started throwing stones and bricks. A melee broke out with shots fired in both directions in what became known as the Pratt Street Riot. Private Luther Ladd, from Lowell, was hit in the head by a scrap of iron. As Ladd fell, a rioter took his musket and shot him in the leg. He died shortly after, becoming known as the first Union soldier killed in action during the Civil War.

Baltimore mayor George William Brown ran to the scene and tried to break it up, but with little success until Police Marshall George Kane and about 50 police officers arrived and formed a line between the soldiers and the mob, allowing the four companies of men to reach the Camden Street station. In all, four militia men had been killed and 35 other members of the Sixth Massachusetts had been wounded.

While the Sixth Massachusetts had escaped Baltimore, they were in for a few tense days upon arriving in Washington, D.C. Virginia had just seceded and rebel-sympathizers had burned railroad bridges in Maryland, essentially cutting the nation's capital off from further outside help. The Sixth Massachusetts stood alone as defenders of the city until April 25 when a regiment from New York arrived. They were soon followed by additional regiments from Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

It was about this time that President Lincoln dispatched one of the junior members of the House of Representatives from Massachusetts as America's new Minister to Great Britain. Charles Francis Adams was the son and grandson of American presidents, both of whom had been considered master diplomats. Charles Francis would match or surpass his illustrious forebears in the field of diplomacy. Charles Francis Adams was given one mission above all: keep Great Britain out of the war. The Union was justified in its concern that Great Britain would support the Confederacy in its rebellion. Great Britain was one of the greatest consumers of cotton from the American South (as were the mills of Lowell). Early in the war, Great Britain had helped smuggle through Union blockades munitions in and cotton out of Southern ports. The shipyards of Liverpool were in the

process of fulfilling orders for ironclads for Confederate privateers. Tirelessly, and with the assistance of his son Henry as his secretary, Adams secured Great Britain's neutrality in the war.

Enthusiasm in Boston for the war effort was high. Huge crowds turned out by Faneuil Hall to cheer on the initial regiments as they gathered for deployment. The state and its business community rallied to the cause as well. The Commonwealth made available to the federal cause its stockpile of munitions, including 3,500 muskets, while the Springfield Armory, the center of manufacturing of American military firearms since its opening in 1777, went into high production. Fort Warren on Georges Island in Boston Harbor served as a prisoner-of-war camp for 2,000 Confederate soldiers. Many Boston banks donated money to the cause, the railroads made their tracks available, and businesses in the region agreed to continue paying salaries to employees who enlisted. The Irish of Boston volunteered in large numbers. Black leaders met with Governor Andrew to ask him to form troop companies from their community.

On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The announcement was greeted with great celebration in Boston, including a speech by Frederick Douglass at the Tremont Temple. Douglass argued that the union was fighting with one hand tied behind its back by its failure to enlist and deploy Black soldiers. It was time for Massachusetts to act boldly. Governor Andrew traveled to Washington and secured permission to enlist volunteer troops "of African descent." Andrew raised private funds to advertise for a new Black regiment, to be called the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He asked Robert Gould Shaw, then a captain with the Second Massachusetts, to return to Boston to assume command of the Fifty-Fourth as colonel. Douglass himself actively recruited for the regiment, sending two of his sons to it. Those who signed up were making a serious commitment to the cause. Most of the recruits had been born free; fighting in the South meant being sold into slavery if taken prisoner. By late February, the regiment was formed, and after training at Camp Meigs[64] in Hyde Park, was given a cheering send-off, to the sounds of Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," from Battery Wharf on

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[64] The location of the training grounds (originally 139 acres) is, today, marked by a memorial park (and a playground), with a series of informative historical signs created by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Pre-Civil War, Camp Meigs had been used for drilling by local militias. During the war, the camp held barracks and officers' quarters, stables, and kitchens. It was used not just by the Fifty-Fourth, but also by the Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts and the Fifth Volunteer Cavalry Regiments.

The accommodations at Camp Meigs were not luxurious, but the men looked back on the experience as promoting regiment cohesion. Private Miles O'Reilly later wrote a poem that he called "We Drank From the Same Canteen," about his experience in camp. It starts, "We have shared our blankets and tents together, And have marched and founght in all kinds of weather, And hungry and full we have been; Had days of battle and days of rest; But this memory I cling to, and love the best – We have drank from the same canteen."

the transport *De Molay* bound for South Carolina. To support the men of the Fifty-Fourth, Governor Andrew asked none other than Harriet Tubman to accompany them as a nurse and cook.

On July 18, 1863, the Fifty-Fourth earned its glory. In a brutal battle that lasted nearly two hours, the regiment laid an assault, in the face of withering defensive fire, on Fort Wagner in Charleston, suffering casualties above 40 percent. The attack was tricky because access to the fort was limited to a narrow spit of sand between Charleston Harbor and impassable marshland. To gain the fort, the men of the Fifty-Fourth would have to travel about a mile under heavy fire, cross a water-filled ditch, and then scale the earthen walls of the fort. There were 600 men in the Fifty-Fourth participating in the charge. The battle started at 7:45 in the evening. At first, the men got pinned down short of the ditch, but after regrouping, they managed to gain the parapet, where the regiment's standard bearer was hit. The flag was picked up by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw but he was shot, mortally, as he clambered to the crest of the walls. The charging men could get no further and had to fall back. The regiment's colors were recovered by Sgt. William H. Carney who was able to return them to the Union line despite multiple gunshot wounds, an act of valor that earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor, the first African American so recognized.[65] The assault had failed.

Confederate soldiers after the battle buried Colonial Shaw in an unmarked mass grave with the other members of the Fifty-Fourth killed in action. The gesture was intended as an insult to an officer, but Shaw's family took it as an honor for Shaw to be buried with his men who had acted with such valor under fire. The men of the Fifty-Fourth were immediately hailed as heroes in the North, and Ralph Waldo Emerson penned a poem, "Voluntaries," in their honor, with the immortal concluding stanza, "And their coming triumph hide; In our downfall, or our joy: Speak it firmly, -- these are gods, All are ghosts beside."[66]

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[65] Carney himself gave a gripping account of the battle. "As we ascended the breastworks, the volleys of grapeshot which came from right and left, and of musketry in front, mowed them down as a scythe would do. In less than twenty minutes I found myself alone, struggling upon the ramparts, while all around me were the dead and wounded, lying upon one another… [After retrieving the company's flag] I wound the colors round the staff and made my way down the parapet into the ditch, which was without water when I crossed it before, but was now filled with water that came up to my waist… In rising to see if I could determine my course to the rear, the bullet I now carry in my body came whizzing like a mosquito, and I was shot. Not being prostrated by the shot, I continued my course, yet had not gone far before I was struck by a second shot." When Carney finally reached the Union line, he was greeted with a cheer. Carney continues his story: "My reply was, 'Boys, I only did my duty. The old flag never touched the ground.'"

[66] The men of the Fifty-Fourth, though, were not done fighting after the charge on Fort Wagner, despite the heavy losses there. In February 1864, the Fifty-Fourth was joined by its companion all-Black Massachusetts regiment, the Fifty-Fifth, at the Battle of Olustee in Florida. It was another battle with extremely high casualty rates, with the Confederates holding their positions again. Later that year, in November, the Massachusetts regiments joined again

That November, Abraham Lincoln gave his famed Gettysburg Address at the dedication of the Soldier's National Cemetery at Gettysburg, in which Lincoln affirmed that the American nation had been formed in dedication "to the proposition that all men are created equal." Interestingly, Lincoln was not the keynote speaker of the event; that honor went to Bostonian Edward Everett, former Massachusetts Governor, United States Senator, and Harvard president (who we previously met in 1847 during the appeal to fight the Irish famine). Everett, however, did not have Lincoln's gift for brevity and spoke for over two hours at the dedication. The next day Everett wrote a note to Lincoln, today in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society, stating, "I would be glad, if I could flatter myself, that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes."

The Emancipation Proclamation and the fame of the Fifty-Fourth helped spur a million enslaved persons to escape north, with as many as 180,000 joining the Union war effort, helping to swing the war to the Union's side.[67] Massachusetts was justly proud of the accomplishments of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts, commissioning the great sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens to honor the soldiers. His work, which took 14 years to complete, stands across from the State House on Beacon Street. It is Boston's greatest sculpture and worth a close examination, although it has recently come under criticism for making the white officer the most prominent figure in a statue meant to commemorate a moment of great Black achievement.[68] Yet, despite Robert Gould Shaw claiming

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at the Battle of Honey Hill in South Carolina. One soldier in the Fifty-Fifth was James Monroe Trotter, who had been born a slave in Mississippi, been manumitted by his white slave-owner father, and eventually made his way to Massachusetts to enlist with the newly forming Black regiments. He fought with distinction throughout the war, rising from private, to sergeant, and finally to second lieutenant, the first African-American commissioned officer. Trotter settled in Boston after the war and enjoyed a successful professional career, first in the United States Postal Service, and later being appointed by President Grover Cleveland as the Recorder of Deeds, becoming the highest-ranking African American in the federal government. Trotter was the father of the important civil rights activist William Monroe Trotter, who we will get to.

[67] The arming of Black troops, following heavy losses of Irish troops at Antietam and Fredericksburg, as well as the decision to relieve General George McClellan of his command, led to disillusionment of many Irish with the war efforts. In July 1863, draft riots broke out in New York City, and spread to Boston, where violence flared around Dock Square and Faneuil Hall until police and federal troops were able to restore order.

As a side note, in 1861, Secretary of War Simon Cameron authorized the formation of an Irish Brigade, made up of three mostly-Irish regiments from New York. They were soon joined in the brigade by the Twenty-Ninth Massachusetts regiment, but that regiment, despite joining the Irish Brigade, was made up mostly of Protestants of English descent. Later, after Antietam, the Twenty-Ninth was replaced in the Brigade with the Twenty-Eighth Massachusetts, whose members were mostly Irish immigrants.

[68] The Saint-Gaudens work was not the only grand artistic Civil War memorial in Boston. In 1884, the Classical-Revival style Cyclorama was built in the South End to house a 400-foot-long cyclorama painting of the Battle of Gettysburg by Paul Philippoteaux. The painting was replaced in 1889 by a new painting on General George Custer's "Last Stand". The building was soon converted into entertainment space, hosting boxing matches, horseback riding, and bicycling, and later made into industrial space. In 1970, the Boston Center for the Arts redeveloped it as visual and performing arts space.

the central position in the bronze sculpture, Saint-Gaudens effectively renders the Black soldiers of the Fifty-Fourth as dignified individuals.

The bustling city of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts, of Charles Sumner and William Lloyd Garrison[69], of Lucy Stone, of Ralph Waldo Emerson and William Ellery Channing, and of Benjamin Roberts and Robert Morris, was a place much changed from the Puritan town of the turn of the century. It was in this boiling cauldron of ideas that a great industrial revolution prospered.

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[69] After emancipation and the war, Garrison retired, and Sumner continued on in the Senate. Neither gave up the fighting spirit though. During Reconstruction, Sumner fought to secure civil rights for all. His efforts culminated, shortly after his death in 1874, in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1875, the last piece of any federal civil rights legislation for more than eight decades. In 1883, however, the United States Supreme Court declared Sumner's legislation unconstitutional, concluding that the Fourteenth Amendment regulated governmental behavior but did not authorize Congress to outlaw private acts of discrimination. Garrison outlived Sumner by five years, though his final years were ones of ill health largely spent out of the public eye. However, in 1876, to help celebrate the country's centennial, Garrison gave one of his last public speeches, lamenting that racism was at the core of the failure of Reconstruction. Weeks before his death, Garrison was invited to give a speech at a rally at Faneuil Hall. Too ill to make it, he sent in written comments: "[L]et the rallying cry be heard from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. 'Liberty and equal rights for each, for all, and forever, wherever the lot of man is cast without our broad domains!'"